

AD A 032416

MEMORANDUM
RM-4983-1-ISA/ARPA
JUNE 1966

A PROFILE OF VIET CONG CADRES

W. P. Davison and J. J. Zasloff

DDC
RECEIVED
NOV 22 1976
B

PREPARED FOR:
THE OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF DEFENSE/INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS
AND THE
ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A
Approved for public release;
Distribution Unlimited

Rand
SANTA MONICA, CA 90406

MEMORANDUM

14 RM-4983-1-ISA/ARPA

11 JUN 1966

12 69p.

6 A PROFILE OF VIET CONG CADRES

10 W. P. Davison ~~and~~ J. J. Zasloff

This research is sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) under Contract SD-300 and by the Advanced Research Projects Agency under Contract SD-79. Views or conclusions contained in the Memorandum should not be interpreted as representing the official opinion or policy of either of these agencies.

15 SD-79, SD-300

ADDITIONAL TO		
DTIC	White Section	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DSG	Grey Section	<input type="checkbox"/>
UNANNOUNCED		<input type="checkbox"/>
JUSTIFICATION.....		
BY		
DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY CODES		
NO.	ORIG. CODE/OF SPECIAL	
A		

Rand
SANTA MONICA, CA 90406

296 600
699

FOREWORD

This report is one of a series of Rand studies that examine the organization, operations, motivation, and morale of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces that fought in South Vietnam.

Between August 1964 and December 1968 The Rand Corporation conducted approximately 2400 interviews with Vietnamese who were familiar with the activities of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese army. Reports of those interviews, totaling some 62,000 pages, were reviewed and released to the public in June 1972. They can be obtained from the National Technical Information Service of the Department of Commerce.

The release of the interviews has made possible the declassification and release of some of the classified Rand reports derived from them. To remain consistent with the policy followed in reviewing the interviews, information that could lead to the identification of individual interviewees was deleted, along with a few specific references to sources that remain classified. In most cases, it was necessary to drop or to change only a word or two, and in some cases, a footnote. The meaning of a sentence or the intent of the author was not altered.

The reports contain information and interpretations relating to issues that are still being debated. It should be pointed out that there was substantive disagreement among the Rand researchers involved in Vietnam research at the time, and contrary points of view with totally different implications for U.S. operations can be found in the reports. This internal debate mirrored the debate that was then current throughout the nation.

A complete list of the Rand reports that have been released to the public is contained in the bibliography that follows.

(CRC, BJ: May 1975)

Bibliography of Related Rand Reports

For a description of the Viet Cong Motivation and Morale Project and interviewing process, the reader should first consult W. Phillips Davison, *User's Guide to the Rand Interviews in Vietnam*, R-1024-ARPA, March 1972.

These reports can be obtained from The Rand Corporation.

- RM-4507/3 Viet Cong Motivation and Morale in 1964: A Preliminary Report, J. C. Donnell, G. J. Pauker, J. J. Zasloff, March 1965.
- RM-4517-1 Some Impressions of the Effects of Military Operations on Viet Cong Behavior, L. Goure, August 1965.
- RM-4552-1 Evolution of a Vietnamese Village -- Part I: The Present, After Eight Months of Pacification, R. M. Pearce, April 1965.
- RM-4692-1 Evolution of a Vietnamese Village -- Part II: The Past, August 1945 to April 1964, R. M. Pearce, April 1966.
- RM-4699-1 Some Impressions of Viet Cong Vulnerabilities: An Interim Report, L. Goure, C.A.H. Thomson, August 1965.
- RM-4703/2 Political Motivation of the Viet Cong: The Vietminh Regroupees, J. J. Zasloff, May 1968.
- RM-4830-2 Viet Cong Motivation and Morale: The Special Case of Chieu Hoi, J. M. Carrier, C.A.H. Thomson, May 1966.
- RM-4864-1 Observations on the Chieu Hoi Program, L. W. Pye, January 1966.
- RM-4911-2 Some Findings of the Viet Cong Motivation and Morale Study: June-December 1965, L. Goure, A. J. Russo, D. Scott, February 1966.
- RM-4966-1 Some Effects of Military Operations on Viet Cong Attitudes, F. H. Denton, November 1966.
- RM-4983-1 A Profile of Viet Cong Cadres, W. P. Davison, J. J. Zasloff, June 1966.
- RM-5013-1 A Profile of the PAVN Soldier in South Vietnam, K. Kellen, June 1966.
- RM-5086-1 Evolution of a Vietnamese Village -- Part III: Duc Lap Since November 1964 and Some Comments on Village Pacification, R. M. Pearce, February 1967.

RM-5114-1 A Look at the VC Cadres: Dinh Tuong Province, 1965-1966, D.W.P. Elliott, C.A.H. Thomson, March 1967.

RM-5163/2 Origins of the Insurgency in South Vietnam, 1954-1960: The Role of the Southern Vietminh Cadres, J. J. Zasloff, May 1968.

RM-5239-1 Insurgent Organization and Operations: A Case Study of the Viet Cong in the Delta, 1964-1966, M. Anderson, M. Arnsten, H. Averch, August 1967.

RM-5267/2 Some Observations on Viet Cong Operations in the Villages, W. P. Davison, May 1968.

RM-5338 Two Analytical Aids for Use with the Rand Interviews, F. Denton, May 1967.

RM-5353-1 The War in the Delta: Views from Three Viet Cong Battalions, M. Gurtov, September 1967.

RM-5414-1 Viet Cong Cadres and the Cadre System: A Study of the Main and Local Forces, M. Gurtov, December 1967.

RM-5423-1 Viet Cong Logistics, L. P. Holliday, R. M. Gurfield, June 1968.

RM-5446-1 An Evaluation of Chemical Crop Destruction in Vietnam, R. Betts, F. Denton, October 1967.

RM-5450-1 A Statistical Analysis of the U.S. Crop Spraying Program in South Vietnam, A. J. Russo, October 1967.

RM-5462-1 A View of the VC: Elements of Cohesion in the Enemy Camp in 1966-1967, K. Kellen, November 1969.

RM-5486-1 Viet Cong Recruitment: Why and How Men Join, J. C. Donnell, December 1967.

RM-5487-1 The Viet Cong Style of Politics, N. Leites, May 1969.

RM-5522-1 Inducements and Deterrents to Defection: An Analysis of the Motives of 125 Defectors, L. Goure, August 1968.

RM-5533-1 The Insurgent Environment, R. M. Pearce, May 1969.

RM-5647 Volunteers for the Viet Cong, F. Denton, September 1968.

RM-5788 Pacification and the Viet Cong System in Dinh Tuong: 1966-1967, D.W.P. Elliott, W. A. Stewart, January 1969.

RM-5799 The Viet Cong in Saigon: Tactics and Objectives During the Tet Offensive, V. Pohle, January 1969.

- RM-5848 Documents of an Elite Viet Cong Delta Unit: The Demolition Platoon of the 514th Battalion -- Part One: Unit Composition and Personnel, D.W.P. Elliott, M. Elliott, May 1969.
- RM-5849 Documents of an Elite Viet Cong Delta Unit: The Demolition Platoon of the 514th Battalion -- Part Two: Party Organization, D.W.P. Elliott, M. Elliott, May 1969.
- RM-5850 Documents of an Elite Viet Cong Delta Unit: The Demolition Platoon of the 514th Battalion -- Part Three: Military Organization and Activities, D.W.P. Elliott, M. Elliott, May 1969.
- RM-5851 Documents of an Elite Viet Cong Delta Unit: The Demolition Platoon of the 514th Battalion -- Part Four: Political Indoctrination and Military Training, D.W.P. Elliott, M. Elliott, May 1969.
- RM-5852 Documents of an Elite Viet Cong Delta Unit: The Demolition Platoon of the 514th Battalion -- Part Five: Personal Letters, D.W.P. Elliott, M. Elliott, May 1969.
- RM-6131-1 Conversations with Enemy Soldiers in Late 1968/Early 1969: A Study of Motivation and Morale, K. Kellen, September 1970.
- RM-6375-1 Rallying Potential Among the North Vietnamese Armed Forces, A Sweetland, December 1970.

PREFACE

Since July 1964, The RAND Corporation's field office in Saigon has been conducting a study of Viet Cong motivation and morale based mainly on interrogations of prisoners and defectors, and to a lesser degree on interviews with refugees and on captured documents. The effort is sponsored jointly by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs and the Advanced Research Projects Agency.

This Memorandum is one of several reports already published or now in preparation that deal with individual aspects of the project. Its authors have analyzed interviews with 112 Viet Cong cadres -- all but a few of them military -- which the RAND team conducted between August 1964 and September 1965. About two-thirds of the group were captives, and the rest voluntary defectors to the Southern side. By exploring each interviewee's political background and beliefs, they have sought to gain insights into the cadres' motivation and state of morale and to uncover weaknesses in the Viet Cong system that might profitably be exploited by Saigon propagandists. The Memorandum concludes with a number of suggestions for possible propaganda approaches.

Among the earlier reports in this series are RM-4911-ISA/ARPA, Some Findings of the Viet Cong Motivation and Morale Study: June-December 1965, by L. Goure, A. J. Russo, and D. Scott, February 1966. It provides an overview of the results of some 450 extensive interviews conducted during 1965, a preliminary analysis of which for the period January-June had been reported in RM-4699-ISA/ARPA, Some Impressions of Viet Cong Vulnerabilities: An Interim Report, by L. Goure and C. A. H. Thomson, August 1965. Special aspects of the problem are dealt with in the recent RM-4830-ISA/ARPA, Viet Cong Motivation and Morale: The Special Case of Chieu Hoi, by J. M. Carrier and C. A. H. Thomson, April 1966, and in the forthcoming RM-5013-ISA/ARPA, A Profile of the PAVN Soldier in South Vietnam, by K. Kellen, May 1966.

SUMMARY

✓ This Memorandum is based on interviews with 112 civilian and military cadres of the Viet Cong (a cadre being here defined as one who commands the authority of at least a squad leader or his civilian equivalent). The interviews were designed to reveal the political views and attitudes of the respondents, the basis and strength of their motivation to fight, and, in the case of defectors and disaffected captives, the reasons for their disenchantment with the Viet Cong. Sixty-four per cent. of the respondents were captives, and the rest voluntary defectors to the South Vietnamese government.

The sample consisted of the following elements: 58 "regroupees," that is, former Vietminh fighters who had been moved to North Vietnam in accordance with the Geneva Agreement of 1954 and, after undergoing military and political training in the North, had been infiltrated back into the South; 20 Vietminh veterans who had remained in the South after 1954; and 34 cadres recruited in the South after 1956. It thus included a large proportion of men who had been in the resistance movement for many years and who had been well indoctrinated. All the interviews took place between August 1964 and September 1965 and thus reflect information about conditions in the Viet Cong up to mid-summer of 1965.

This group of respondents does not constitute a random sample in the scientific sense. Moreover, given the uncertainty of the prisoners' and defectors' status, self-interest must inevitably have prompted certain deliberate distortions in their statements. Nevertheless, the interview material permits a number of conclusions and generalizations whose validity can be tested against internal evidence or known facts. And even a clearly biased account from Viet Cong respondents may be revealing and useful. ↗

In exploring some of the reasons that men join the insurgency, the authors of this Memorandum identified the three main categories of cadres mentioned above: the "new" revolutionaries who were recruited from the general population after 1956; the old Vietminh fighters who remained in the South after the partition and who were persuaded to involve themselves anew in the struggle; and the regroupees who were

subject to the orders of the North Vietnamese government. Despite the differences in age and environment, the groups were, in the main, similarly motivated by nationalism, the desire for reunification by any means, and, especially as regards the former Vietminh, a hatred of the "neocolonialist" and corrupt Diem regime that was intensified by Diem's treatment of the earlier resistance members. In many cases, coercion played a considerable part in the recruitment, as did the desire of individual recruits for power and position in a movement they expected to be victorious. A system of rewards and of advancement based on merit and performance rather than formal education or status also served as a strong inducement to join. Ideological rationalization was supplied by a propaganda machine that created an image of the political world designed to generate the combination of anger, hope, and self-interest that makes men willing to fight and suffer.

From the wealth of the case histories and comments of the cadres interviewed, the authors have tried to isolate those particular, recurrent experiences of Viet Cong fighters and functionaries that point to weaknesses in the VC structure -- its organization, policies, and propaganda effort -- and thus suggest areas of vulnerability that might profitably be exploited by the propaganda agencies of the South Vietnamese government. Thus, defectors as well as prisoners repeatedly mentioned family ties -- the knowledge that they were needed at home, requests from families that they rally, or the news of their relatives working for the government -- as reasons for their disenchantment with the communist cause. Unless a man was otherwise dissatisfied, ideological arguments were rarely paramount, though religious oppression on the communist side was sometimes mentioned, and the ruthless Northern land reform witnessed by the regroupees rankled with some. Disillusionment with the veracity of Viet Cong propaganda upon discovering at first hand that conditions in the South were not as presented, growing unhappiness at the Viet Cong's ruthless tactics toward their enemies, and resentment also at the excessive regimentation of cadres and rank and file alike, were the subjects of many statements by interviewees.

Frictions within the Viet Cong organization, such as those caused by the animosity of some Southern Vietminh cadres toward the regroupees

from the North who were moved into positions of authority, were at least a potential source of disunity; they may become stronger as the ethnic Northerners now fighting in the South in larger numbers create new rivalries. But no single reason for disaffection was so strong and apparent as simple war-weariness; for many of the cadres this arduous struggle had been going on for twenty years, and, despite Viet Cong promises of a speedy victory, it was showing no sign of an early end.

Drawing on these and other weak points in the Viet Cong system that might prove profitable targets for Saigon's propaganda agencies, the authors conclude with several operational suggestions, some more readily feasible than others, some clearly dependent on the military course of events, and some that would have to be geared to larger policy decisions. They point out the importance of reporting the news truthfully, be it good or bad, thereby strengthening people's trust in the government and underscoring also the unreliability of VC propaganda. Indeed, the contrast between the Viet Cong's promise and observable reality, already disquieting to many in the National Liberation Front, should be stressed at every opportunity. Using the personal appeal rather than a general, theoretical approach, Saigon propagandists would do well to publicize case histories of defectors, enlisting the help of such defectors in the effort wherever possible, and to describe in detail practical ways of defecting. To create a clearer image of what the United States is doing in Vietnam and why, and to give verifiable instances of American behavior, should be yet another aim of Vietnamese propaganda.

The effort to win over larger numbers of Viet Cong cadres will benefit by constant stress on the fact that the Viet Cong are losing in the popular support they regard as crucial to victory. The effort will be the more effective, in the authors' view, as the government offers such positive inducements to the potential rallier as the promise of social acceptance and economic opportunity. They suggest as a possible symbol as well as instrument of rehabilitation an Association of Former Vietminh Fighters now loyal to the government. In view of their general finding that the Viet Cong are more strongly impelled by nationalism than by Marxist ideas, the writers emphasize the importance of enlisting nationalistic sentiment on the side of the South Vietnamese government

and simultaneously strengthening the public's conviction that this government is the legitimate representative of the people of South Vietnam.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	iii
PREFACE.....	vii
SUMMARY.....	ix
Section	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. REASONS FOR BECOMING ACTIVE IN THE INSURGENCY.....	5
III. REWARDS AND ADVANCEMENT IN THE MOVEMENT.....	11
IV. THE VIET CONG VIEW OF THE POLITICAL WORLD.....	17
A. The United States.....	17
B. Communist China and the Soviet Union.....	20
C. North and South Vietnam.....	22
V. EXPECTATIONS AS TO THE COURSE OF THE WAR.....	29
VI. WEAKNESSES WITHIN THE VIET CONG.....	35
A. Personal and Family Reasons for Disaffection.....	35
B. Ideological and Philosophical Reasons.....	37
C. Disillusionment with Viet Cong Propaganda and Tactics.....	38
D. Dislike of Regimentation.....	44
E. War-Weariness.....	46
F. Internal Frictions within the Viet Cong.....	48
VII. OPERATIONAL SUGGESTIONS.....	51
A. The Tone and Substance of Propaganda.....	52
B. Propaganda Requiring Policy Decisions.....	54
C. The Problems of Nationalism and Legitimacy.....	56
Appendix	
VIET CONG CADRES: CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE.....	57

I. INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this memorandum is to provide background information and suggestions for propaganda directed to Viet Cong lower-level cadres, and for policies affecting them. In a movement such as the National Liberation Front, where a powerful central leadership directs operations throughout a wide geographical area, the importance of company and village cadres is obvious. They perform a role similar to that of the foremen in a factory, who translate policies into action and provide a link between management and workers. The Viet Cong define as "cadres" all those who occupy positions of leadership in their political or military structure. Thus the term includes all village officials in areas controlled by the Viet Cong, as well as district and province officials. It also includes squad and platoon leaders in the armed forces, and those whom we would call commissioned officers. If the insurgency in Vietnam is to be terminated, ways will have to be found of dealing with this key element in the Viet Cong organization.

Most lower-level cadres are politically conscious and politically literate, with at least several years of formal education. They are better indoctrinated than the masses of Viet Cong followers and fighters, but they are also in a position to be more aware of the problems and contradictions within the movement. In addition, they are more likely than the rank and file to have access to radios and other means of learning about the world outside. They are therefore a prime target for political propaganda.

Cadres for Viet Cong military and political organizations may be divided into four categories. First, and probably most important, are the "regroupees" — those South Vietnamese who were moved to North Vietnam in 1954 and who infiltrated back into the South after 1958, following military and political training in the North. Second are the former Vietminh personnel who stayed in the South, and who became active organizers for the Viet Cong after 1956. Most members of this category have been used in political rather than military capacities. Third are the South Vietnamese — usually younger — who were recruited into the Viet Cong movement after 1956 and who then rose in the ranks

to become cadres. Finally, there are the ethnic North Vietnamese who were infiltrated into the country to serve as technical specialists, intelligence agents, and liaison officers for the North after 1956, and, after 1963, as cadres for Viet Cong or Northern units. The following discussion will deal with the first three categories only, since there were relatively few ethnic Northerners among the cadres examined for this study.

In spite of the fact that the ranks of the regrouped and of the old Vietminh personnel who remained in the South have been greatly reduced by old age, disease, and war, both categories remain extremely important. Together they constitute what we might call the "steel frame" of the movement. As time goes on, more recent South Vietnamese recruits and North Vietnamese infiltrators may become more important, but in 1965 the first two categories still apparently constituted the backbone of the middle and lower cadres. For instance, as of the summer of 1965, the entire District Party Committee in Lai Thieu District, Binh Duong Province, was reported to be made up of regrouped or old Vietminh personnel. In a Viet Cong company operating in Quang Tri Province at about the same time, the company commander and his assistant, the political officer, the two platoon leaders, and their assistants were all said to be regrouped.¹

This Memorandum is based primarily on interviews with 112 Viet Cong personnel, with a military or civilian rank equivalent to that of squad leader or higher, who defected to or were captured by the South Vietnamese.²

¹The regrouped are dealt with very extensively in a separate Memorandum, by J. J. Zasloff, Political Motivation of the Viet Cong: The Vietminh Regrouped, The RAND Corporation, RM-4703-ISA/ARPA, soon to be published.

²The sample of 112 is broken down as follows: 58 regrouped, of whom over three-quarters were captives; 20 Vietminh who remained in the South, all but three of whom were captives; and 34 recruited since 1956, 11 of whom were captives. It thus includes a large proportion of men who had been in the resistance movement for many years, and who had been well indoctrinated. As the ranks of the regrouped cadres and former Vietminh who remained in the South are thinned by death, age, and defection, the relative importance of younger and less well indoctrinated

The interviews were designed to reveal the political views and attitudes of the respondents, the basis and strength of their motivation to fight, and, in the case of defectors and disaffected prisoners, the reasons for their disenchantment with the Viet Cong. Interviewees were encouraged to speak freely, without fear of self-incrimination, as the discussion was part of a scholarly inquiry, not an official interrogation.

Since those who defected or were captured are not necessarily representative of all Viet Cong cadres, and since even those who were in South Vietnamese hands could not be randomly sampled, these interviews probably do not represent a cross section. Furthermore, both defectors and captives are in a position where it is difficult for them to give their honest opinions on all questions, and some respondents clearly tried to ingratiate themselves with their interviewers. Nevertheless, a great deal can be learned from interviews of this type. Answers can be checked against each other and against captured documents. Questions dealing with matters that either are not very sensitive or that have little obvious political content are not likely to draw intentionally biased answers. And even when a bias is obvious, the answer may still be revealing.

cadres recruited since 1956 will rise. A shift of this nature has probably been taking place at an accelerating rate during the past year because of stepped-up U.S. and South Vietnamese military activities. Further information about the characteristics of the 112 sources is given in the Appendix.

Only 4 North Vietnamese cadres were interviewed; there was thus too little information about them available to make generalizations possible. All interviews took place between August 1964 and September 1965 and thus reflect information about conditions in the Viet Cong up to mid-summer of 1965.

Civilian cadres who were interviewed came from the village organization, and in a few cases from higher organizations of the National Liberation Front. Military cadres came from all three operational levels of the Viet Cong military organization: the main force, the local (or regional) forces, and the village guerrillas. The main force is composed of mobile, professional military units. They are the best-equipped, -trained, and -indoctrinated. The local forces, which normally operate within a given province or district, are also full-time, but are less well equipped and trained. In the villages there are some full-time guerrillas, and a larger number who serve on a part-time basis. They provide a military force at the disposal of the Village Party Committee. Nearly all the military cadres had served at company level or lower.

Because of the probably unrepresentative nature of the sample we will not present our observations in absolute numbers or percentages; to do so would be meaningless. We will, however, point out areas of strength and weakness in the Viet Cong structure, and we have given special attention in this memorandum to "marginal" elements -- that is, to those cadres whose morale is such that they might be susceptible to persuasive propaganda.

In a rapidly changing situation such as the one in Vietnam, no analysis can be completely up-to-date. We have based our observations mainly on interview materials that were available in Washington as of the end of 1965, none of which contained information later than September 1965. In some cases, more recent information from Saigon has made it possible to indicate trends and developments that were becoming evident as of the start of 1966, but updating on all subjects has not been possible. This memorandum should therefore be viewed as a background summary, rather than as an attempt to give an up-to-the-minute picture.

A final caution is that it is difficult to generalize about "the cadre." Those whose functions are political differ in important respects from those in military units; those serving as guerrillas are not the same as those in the Main Force, and so on. Attempts to define common characteristics and trends must therefore be qualified by the observation that these do not necessarily hold in all cases.

II. REASONS FOR BECOMING ACTIVE IN THE INSURGENCY

Reasons why an individual became active in the Viet Cong have more than historical significance. Insofar as they continue to be important to him, they help to explain why he behaves as he does after he is in the movement; if they cease to have meaning for him, this fact may play a part in his decision to return to the side of the Saigon government.

Different categories of cadres became involved in the insurgency in different ways. Only those who joined the Viet Cong after 1956 were new revolutionaries, who had to be recruited from among the general population. The Vietminh who remained in the South did not have to be recruited in that sense, but in many cases they did have to be persuaded to become active again. The regroupes were already under communist authority in North Vietnam and could simply be ordered to proceed to the South. Nevertheless, they still had to be motivated to withstand the hardships of life with the Viet Cong and not to desert to the authorities. Some who were determined to remain in North Vietnam were able to avoid mobilization for service with the Viet Cong.

In spite of the major differences among these categories, it is striking how similar the motivations were that led members of all of them to become active in the insurgency. The two major driving forces that played a role in the great majority of cases were nationalism, on the one hand, and hate of the Diem regime and the local civilian and military officials of this regime, on the other. In addition, some individuals hoped to gain land for their families and honor or position for themselves by getting in on the ground floor in a revolutionary movement they believed would be successful. Others were trapped in one way or another by the Viet Cong, who threatened them with retribution if they did not join, or who compromised them in the eyes of local South Vietnamese officials. In few cases was there a single reason for joining or becoming active again; nearly all individuals reported a combination of motives.

Opposition to "neocolonialism" has been a powerful political force in many newly independent nations, and South Vietnam is no exception. Viet Cong organizers successfully portrayed Diem as a puppet of the

Americans, alleging that Diem and the Americans were preventing the unification of the country and were robbing the Vietnamese of the fruit of their successful struggle against the French. A former Vietminh summarized the story of how he became active in the Viet Cong as follows:

I resumed my activities for the Communists in 1956. From 1954 to 1956, all the Communists regrouped to the North. In 1956, Viet Cong cadres returned clandestinely to the village, and reestablished their organizations. They made propaganda and educated the villagers on their aims and policy line. They praised me for all the contributions I had made to the Resistance, and urged me to join their ranks to fulfill my duty towards the country and nation. I became self-awakened and joined them.

Typical of the viewpoint expressed by many Viet Cong is that stated by a regroupee cadre:

The French before and the Americans at present have the same goal -- to invade Vietnam, enslave the people, and exploit human labor and resources to enrich the totalitarian capitalists in their own country.

Other stressed that they did not want any foreigners to dominate their country politically or militarily, and that only foreign interference was preventing reunification. Those who had been regrouped to the North, in particular, were seriously frustrated when national elections did not take place in 1956, because this meant that they would not soon rejoin their families, as they had been promised. The North Vietnamese leaders appear to have been successful in most cases in turning this disappointment into anger at the "Americans and Diem" and channeling it into a revolutionary commitment.

Of even greater importance in swelling the Viet Cong ranks were the practices of the Diem regime and its representatives in the countryside. Especially after 1958, former Vietminh cadres who remained in the South were harassed by government officials. Many were arrested; others were threatened with arrest. Most of them who were interviewed gave fear of arrest, and hatred for the regime that brought this fear on them, as an important reason for joining the insurgency. Similarly, the families of those who had regrouped to the North were watched and discriminated against, and this increased the eagerness of the regroupees to return and overthrow the hated regime. All those who had fought in the Resistance against the French had been convinced that they were fighting for

a patriotic cause and had been honored to serve that cause. But now they and their families were being treated as enemies. A substantial number apparently had little stomach for joining the Viet Cong and becoming revolutionaries again, and in some cases they delayed a long time before taking the step, but a combination of old loyalties and political grievances ultimately drove them to it.

Diem's repressive policies, as administered by officials who not infrequently were arbitrary, corrupt, or cruel, were mentioned by a large proportion of the interviewees. One former Vietminh, who had been elected a village official in 1954 and claimed to have been loyal to the Saigon government, told the following story. Suspected of being a Viet Cong agent, he was sentenced without trial to five years in prison. Meanwhile, his eldest sister was secretly done away with by government officials; and Saigon troops mopped up his home village, arrested his wife, and shot her. In a second sweep of his village by government forces, his house and furniture were burned and his fourteen-year-old daughter died from illness and sadness, or else committed suicide; he wasn't sure which.

Such a succession of calamities was perhaps unusual, but lesser grievances were enough to cause people to heed the omnipresent Viet Cong propagandists. Another former Vietminh complained that the payment of bribes to local officials was more onerous than the payment of taxes:

Five piasters here, five piasters there. We were obliged to take national lottery tickets, which we then threw away because we didn't know how to find out about the results. Sometimes we were sold tickets when the drawing had already been made. Everybody paid bribes. Also, the guards asked us to bring them little things from the market: coffee, cigarettes, perfume (English), and they never repaid us. We had to bring them these things just the same, because we had to trade.

A cadre who had been recruited after 1956 reported that a relatively minor incident had led to his joining the Viet Cong. As a high-school student he had been falsely accused by a local policeman of throwing Viet Cong leaflets into the back of a military truck. The policeman slapped him and then arrested him. He was freed by one of his father's friends who happened to pass by, but a Viet Cong village cadre heard about the incident, came to see the boy several times, and gradually

persuaded him to join the insurgency. Others who later became cadres complained that village officials had compelled them to spend a great deal of time doing hard, unpaid labor -- for instance, setting up agro-villes -- and that they had suffered economically from this. Stories about the misdeeds of militiamen, who allegedly spent much of their time beating up the villagers and stealing their chickens and ducks, appear with monotonous regularity, and poor behavior on the part of the government armed forces was one of the most important factors motivating people to become active in the Viet Cong. The overbearing, "feudal" attitude of local officials, who treated the people disrespectfully and upheld class distinctions, was also frequently mentioned. Many people joined the insurgents not so much because of the material or physical penalties inflicted by the regime as in search of personal dignity.

Viet Cong agents not only played on and fanned the fears and grievances of those who felt they had been mistreated, but added their own element of coercion. As the insurgents gained control of more and more territory, they were able to make credible threats against people who were reluctant to join them. If a man was suspected by the government and simultaneously threatened by the Viet Cong, he was indeed in an unenviable position. Several interviewees spoke of being ground between two stones. They usually resolved the situation by taking to the woods with the insurgents, who sweetened their threats with promises of glory, while the government merely threatened and offered nothing.

In numerous cases, interviewees claimed that the Viet Cong had trapped them into joining. A favorite device was to lure a youth into a Viet Cong-controlled area, seize his identity card, and then tell him that he now had no choice but to join the insurgency, since he would be arrested by the first government official who asked him for identification.

In other cases, threats were not necessary. Some young men, especially from poor families, were lured with promises of education and advancement.³ Seeing no avenue open to them in society as they

³Promises of education played a role in Viet Cong recruitment prior to 1964, but apparently have not been used during the past two years.

knew it, they were eager to join a cause that offered them greater opportunities. The son of a farmer in the southern tip of the country recounted his experience as follows:

A friend of mine in the hamlet persuaded me to join. He had joined the Front sometime before, and was sent back to my hamlet to head it.... He told me that I could advance in society if I joined the Front. I became enthusiastic and confident in the front and agreed to join.

While the desire for advancement, for land, or for personal status was frequently given as one reason for becoming active in the Viet Cong, especially among those who joined after 1956, it is striking how seldom these desires were couched in terms of Marxist ideology. Indeed, men who joined because they were attracted by communist doctrine seem to be almost nonexistent. At the most, one finds cadres who heeded the Viet Cong promise that "the poor people would have enough to eat and they would be the owners of the land they till" -- a promise that could find a place in the program of almost any political party.

In very few, if any, cases were a person's patriotism, grievances, or desires strong enough to take him seek out the Viet Cong with the purpose of joining. The phenomenal growth of the movement was due to a combination of these motivating factors with the active personal recruitment efforts of communist cadres. A regrouped mentioned that each Party member had to give special attention to some nonmember among the mass; and a former Vietminh remarked that "when we propagandize a person, we have to find out what his dissatisfactions are and then work on his dissatisfactions to incite him to struggle." The post-colonial surge of nationalism and the oppressive Diem regime prepared the ground, but industrious Viet Cong workers harvested the crop.

III. REWARDS AND ADVANCEMENT IN THE MOVEMENT

No matter what his motivation for joining, a member of the National Liberation Front encountered a number of factors that tended to keep his morale high and his performance efficient once he was part of the movement. Some of these factors were of an internal nature; others were mechanisms for indoctrination, rewards, and punishments that were built into the system. The strength of the forces maintaining morale can be judged by the fact that the Viet Cong has been a highly effective organization at the same time that its cadres and ordinary members alike have had to put up with intense hardships and deprivations, dangers, and a lack of material rewards. Viet Cong personnel receive not a fixed salary but a modest food ration or a meager living allowance to spend for food — usually about seven piasters per day. In some cases they are given another twenty to thirty piasters a month for tobacco, and cadres may receive small additional allowances. They may be issued clothes, or they may have to procure these from their families. Sickness is frequent among them, medicines are scarce, and casualties common. They are expected to avoid luxuries even when these are available, and they usually do.

In the case of cadres, morale is likely to be bolstered by the conviction that promotion will be based on achievement and qualifications. As far as we could determine, this belief corresponded fairly well with the facts, at least until recently. Reports of nepotism or favoritism have occurred, but until the last months of 1965 they were rare. If a man worked hard, carried out orders faithfully, and showed the ability to shoulder greater responsibilities, he was likely to be promoted. At the village guerrilla level, this seemed to be true even of those who had been with the Viet Cong only a short time. Men who had had military training in the government forces were often subjected to a brief period of "reeducation" and additional military training, and then assigned as lower-level cadres. For instance, a man who had formerly been a platoon leader in the GVN's Combat Youth was assigned as platoon leader to a Viet Cong village unit about three months after his capture by the insurgents. Another was made Assistant Secretary of a Viet Cong

village committee -- a post carrying substantial authority -- after less than five months with the movement, apparently because he had previously been a schoolteacher and knew how to handle paper work.⁴ Most of those in our sample reported that they had been promoted because of meritorious service in lower ranks. An assistant platoon leader and political officer in the Viet Cong regional forces stated: "In December 1963 I was sent to attend a cadre training course. I was then known for bravery and past achievements in combat, and my superiors wanted to promote me to a higher rank." A defector mentioned that, when a village unit leader or a squad leader was killed, the Viet Cong authorities picked the most capable man available in the squad to be trained as his successor. Anyone who was brave, hard-working, and conscientious was likely to be promoted, although promotion of those from a "bourgeois" background was likely to be slower than in the case of poor farmers.

Another form of recognition conferred on brave and dedicated men is acceptance into the Party, although here political reliability plays a more crucial role. It is noteworthy that most lower-level cadres refer simply to "the Party," without giving it any further designation. When asked for its full name, some say simply that it is the Communist Party. Others say that it is the Lao Dong (the North Vietnamese Labor Party), while some mention the PRP (the People's Revolutionary Party of South Vietnam). Nearly all insist that the three are the same thing and have the same chain of command, although a few regrouped with superior political training say that the Lao Dong and the PRP currently have different tasks -- the job of the former being to consolidate socialism in the North and that of the latter to complete the revolution in the South. One montagnard who was taken into the Party said that he had no idea what party it was.

Being a Party member carries no material rewards, and does not necessarily give a person greater formal authority. Indeed, in some ways Party members are worse off than others, since they not only have to pay Party dues from their slender resources but are also expected

⁴Such appointments may also reflect Viet Cong confidence in their own ability to "reeducate" quickly those with previously hostile or neutral political attitudes.

to work harder and to set a good example to others. As a propaganda cadre said,

Party members have to set a good example in all forms of Party activities. They have to be the best men in their section, by slaving all day to set a good example for the rest of the Front members. Only by slaving all day can they be in a position to criticize the other cell members and to force the others into working hard, just like a locomotive pulling the cars.

Even defectors recognized that Party members had to work harder than others and to show such virtues as courtesy, modesty, and courage.

Although Party membership imposes stern obligations, there are also some important rewards. A member has greater prestige than a nonmember; he is honored and esteemed, and he is likely to be promoted more rapidly. His subjective sense of worth is also increased by the fact that he has a right to take part in the policy discussions of his unit. He is a member of the "in" group. In a squad or platoon he helps to plan the attack; in a village bureaucracy he participates in discussions of orders received from higher echelons and takes part in deciding how to implement these orders. He thus is among the first in his unit to know about what is going on.

That these inducements exercised a powerful pull on many men is indicated by numerous passages in the interviews. When asked how he felt about being admitted to the Party, a reconnaissance squad leader replied:

I felt very proud. As a Party member I had new powers... It meant power to recommend someone for Party membership; power to solve problems arising among my comrades; power to speak for the people.... Those who were not Party members did not have enough virtue to be trusted with high positions or important missions.... I was proud of my achievements compared to those of my comrades who had joined the Front before me and were not rewarded with Party membership.

Another reply suggests that expectations of future rewards may also have played a role in some cases:

Party membership was a great honor and entitled one to discuss the unit's decisions. Besides, with the Front's final victory the Party member's future would be assured.

Even those who claimed that they had been forced to join the Party

(an allegation that it is difficult to take at face value) confirmed that membership was an honor and that a member had more prestige than a simple cadre.

In effect, the Viet Cong's policies governing promotion and Party membership made it possible for them to differentiate between those who were motivated by a desire for power and respect, and the men who were more interested in material rewards.⁵ The former were steadily advanced into leadership positions, leaving as followers those for whom power and respect had less attraction. There is more than a hint of this in the statement of a Viet Cong village propaganda official:

It was the Party that had all the power and decided everything. Being a Party member means being among the leaders.... Then I thought to myself that in the village it would be much better to be among those who gave the orders than among those who knew only how to carry out the orders.

The Viet Cong leadership was thus adept at making the most advantageous use of the human material at its disposal in order to build a stable political and military structure. Men who had the ability to perform well were advanced administratively on the basis of their performance, at least at the lower levels. Those who, in addition, were judged to be politically reliable and who had a stronger-than-average hunger for power and respect were taken into the Party, where they could exercise a policy function as well.⁶ At company and district levels, and above, all cadres are likely to be Party members.

In addition to being motivated by such rewards as promotion and Party membership, most cadres sincerely believe that their cause is a just one, and that they are fighting for the people and for the nation.

⁵Interviews conducted since September 1965 have revealed some cadres to have been corrupted by power and the opportunities for graft. If these reports prove to represent a genuine trend, they suggest an important area for propaganda exploitation.

⁶Before being proposed as a Party member, an individual ordinarily had to serve as a member of the Youth Group. This additional screening mechanism is common to most communist parties.

A former Vietminh said:

Everybody views the ARVN (government) soldier as a traitor serving an illegitimate cause. The Front soldier serves an honorable cause which is to fight for peace, for the liberation of the people, and for the reunification of the country. Therefore it is more glorious to serve in the Front.

Many others added that the government soldiers were really mercenaries, serving only for pay.

Formerly, these idealistic motivations were strengthened by a feeling of being loved by the Vietnamese people, although this may be less true now. Most cadres have had the experience of being fed by villagers, hidden in their houses, and helped in other ways. Many have seen Viet Cong units receive cordial receptions in villages, and are confident that this kind of popular behavior is based on love, rather than fear. Some of these receptions have been stage-managed by cadres in the villages. Others were apparently genuine, especially when a large proportion of the families involved had sons serving in the Viet Cong. In any event, up until 1965, cadres were likely to cite as one of the virtues of the movement the fact that it "stays close to the people," and many of them mentioned that they were sustained by a sense of popular affection and support. During the past year, some cadres have said that people obeyed them because of fear, or that people resented increased Viet Cong taxation and forced recruitment for military service.

Even those cadres who defect often show a sense of organizational pride. They are proud of the ability of Viet Cong units to put up with hardships and to fight without pay. They feel that the organization is efficient, and skillful in accomplishing its aims. In some cases they mentioned that they derived a sense of dignity from participating in the movement: that there were few outward signs of status differentiation between officers and men, and that those in higher ranks did not look down on those below them. Defectors sometimes showed only a grudging respect for the Viet Cong, but the respect was nevertheless there.

As in the case of recruitment, formal communist ideology seems to play a minor role in motivating lower-level cadres once they are in

the movement. Even among the regroupees who had received extensive indoctrination over several years, few had read Marx, or even Mao or Giap. Their indoctrination was largely oral, and was focused mainly on explaining the current situation and the objectives of the revolution. Some, however, had absorbed a Marxian philosophy of history. They identified themselves as "Communists" or "Socialists," but the principal significance of this would seem to be that they thought of themselves as part of the "socialist camp," and therefore supported by powerful allies. Their formula for reorganizing South Vietnam was a vaguely communist one, in the style of the North Vietnamese People's Republic, but few had a concrete image of the future government or society for which they had been struggling. Some of them mentioned land reform as an objective, but insisted that this would be a "voluntary reform" and would avoid the excesses of land reform in North Vietnam, where thousands of landlords and rich farmers were executed or otherwise treated with extreme harshness.

While there are thus many positive factors that motivate cadres and ordinary Viet Cong members to perform well once they are in the movement, the leadership does not rely on these alone. They are powerfully reinforced by an all-embracing system of surveillance, indoctrination, and self-criticism. This system involves all ranks; and cadres or Party members, instead of being partially freed from it once they rise to those levels, are watched even more carefully and subjected to even more study and criticism sessions than the lower ranks. Some cadres reported daily sessions at which they were expected to discuss current tasks and review their own and others' attitudes, as well as special orientation courses that were held once or twice a year. A substantial number of those in our sample were stripped of their Party membership because of real or alleged failings, and for all cadres and Party members, the threat of criticism, reprimand, and demotion is ever present.

IV. THE VIET CONG VIEW OF THE POLITICAL WORLD

A. THE UNITED STATES

One of the principal Viet Cong propaganda themes is that the primary enemy of the Vietnamese people is the United States. According to the version of history presented in indoctrination sessions and official documents, American imperialism has replaced French colonialism in Vietnam, and Americans are preventing liberation of the country and the achievement of Vietnamese revolutionary goals. American imperialism is also denounced for supporting the "feudalism" of the Diem regime and its successors, all of which are presented as puppets of the United States. Two powerful appeals are thus combined in Viet Cong propaganda strategy: Vietnamese nationalism is evoked by the denunciation of American imperialism, and social discontent is exploited and its causes are blamed on the Americans.

According to the Viet Cong, the United States has a goal similar to the one France had earlier -- the domination of Vietnam, but the Americans are proving more clever than the French in using Vietnamese "puppets" to do their bidding. They are said to have installed the Diem regime when they replaced the French in 1954, and to have supported Diem's violation of the Geneva Agreement when he refused to hold general elections in 1956, since neither the United States nor Diem wanted reunification under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, the inevitable victor. When the Americans realized that widespread opposition to Diem was menacing U.S. interests they overthrew him, setting up a series of military dictators in his place.

Those among the interviewees who are loyal to the Viet Cong explain American interests in Vietnam by several theories. Many stress economic motives, saying that U.S. capitalists want Vietnam as a cheap source of raw materials and an outlet for their manufactures. Some believed that the United States is primarily interested in preventing the spread of communism, not only in South Vietnam but throughout Southeast Asia. Others allege that American interests are mainly military: that the United States is using Vietnam as a testing ground for unconventional warfare, and that, in addition, it needs a military base

from which to attack North Vietnam and Communist China.

American economic aid does not dissuade indoctrinated Viet Cong from believing that U.S. interests are exploitative. Most American aid, they say, comes in the form of "munitions, jet planes, and poisons," and little is sent for the good of the Vietnamese people. When they see American consumer products for sale in Vietnamese shops, they accept this as proof that the United States is seeking an outlet for its manufactured goods. They do not know of the complex mechanism through which these sales convert aid into local currency.

The Viet Cong official position, which the more sophisticated interviewees repeated, makes a distinction between the warmongers in the American government, especially the Pentagon, and the mass of peace-loving American people. At least as of 1964 and 1965, personnel were admonished to treat American prisoners humanely, and interviews reveal that this instruction was acknowledged, even though it was not always followed. (Recent atrocities against American personnel suggest that the instruction may have been changed.) Furthermore, it is maintained that the pressure of American public opinion, combined with that of world public opinion, will eventually force the United States to withdraw from South Vietnam. To support this contention, Viet Cong propagandists point out that opposition in France, as well as in other countries, played a large part in forcing the French government to capitulate to the Vietminh in 1954.

Most interviewees, even those who defected from the Viet Cong for ideological reasons, repeat at least part of this official line when asked what the United States is doing in South Vietnam. Some qualify it by adding that this is what they were told while with the insurgents, and then go on to express other ideas. Whether they already entertained these ideas while in the Front, or whether they acquired them after defection or capture, is not clear. Nor can one be certain to what extent they were trying to ingratiate themselves with their interviewers. Nevertheless, it is useful to examine these ideas because, self-serving or not, they indicate modes of reasoning that former Viet Cong personnel at least find sufficiently credible to be worthy of expression.

Among the most common reasons for doubting the official Viet Cong

line is that the United States is a rich country. A former village official stated:

There is nothing in Vietnam which could incite the Americans to grab this country. They only come here to help South Vietnam, so that it will not fall into the hands of North Vietnam.

A former propaganda cadre also observed that the United States was a strong and rich country which did not need the resources of South Vietnam. Others merely asked the rhetorical question: what can a rich country like the United States gain from a poor country like South Vietnam?

Still another commonly mentioned idea that conflicted with Viet Cong propaganda about the United States often was expressed in terms of a family analogy. For example:

At present, the United States is the leader of the bourgeois countries, exactly like the head of a family. If an outsider beats a member of the family, it will be impossible for the family chief to look on; he will have lost face.

A number of interviewees remarked that the purpose of the United States was to contain the spread of communism, that it had responded to an appeal for help from the South Vietnamese Government, that its aim was to preserve the right of the people to live in peace, or that its intention was to help South Vietnam build a prosperous society.

Personal experiences, either firsthand or reported by friends, are cited fairly often as a reason for doubting the Viet Cong line about the United States. Some interviewees had actually seen Americans, and noted that they didn't behave as though they were exploiting anyone. A propaganda cadre who defected in early 1965 concluded that American behavior just did not conform very well with the Viet Cong allegations:

They said the Americans have come here with the intention of seizing Vietnam.... This is a propaganda theme constantly used by the cadres. At the beginning, the majority of the villagers believed it. But as the years passed by and as no one was able to find out that the Americans did anything to confirm this theme, the villagers began to doubt it.... I think that at the present time only a few villagers still believe that the Americans have come here to take over the country.

The Viet Cong propaganda line about the United States is likely to be increasingly vulnerable as people learn more about actual American aims and behavior.

B. COMMUNIST CHINA AND THE SOVIET UNION

As presented in Viet Cong indoctrination sessions, Communist China and the Soviet Union are both friendly members of the socialist camp, to which North Vietnam and the Viet Cong also belong. Sino-Soviet differences are rarely mentioned in official propaganda, even though they are widely known to cadres. During the current phase of the war in South Vietnam, there is no need for the Chinese or the Soviets to intervene actively, according to the official line, and the fact that they have not intervened shows the socialist countries' love of peace. They do, admittedly, provide fraternal aid in the form of weapons, and if it becomes necessary they will spring to the aid of the National Liberation Front. When Viet Cong propagandists find themselves forced to admit that the Chinese and the Soviets differ on the proper way of dealing with American imperialism, they tell their audiences that this will have no effect on the current struggle, since both nations support the Vietnamese people.

If, in the course of interviews, loyal Viet Cong are asked whether there is a danger that China will seek to dominate Vietnam, they are apt to deny this. According to their view, China is a friendly ally and has no aggressive intentions. They also are likely to indicate that they favor China over the Soviet Union, because they see more evidence of Chinese support for the National Liberation Front.

As in the case of opinions about the United States, there is no way of knowing the extent to which interviewees are disclosing their real attitudes when asked about China and the Soviet Union. Some follow the line that has been described above, but others mention ideas that conflict with it. These ideas usually fall in one of three categories: concern about the Sino-Soviet split, resentment at the limited extent of aid from the socialist countries, or apprehension about China's long-range intentions.

Concerning the Sino-Soviet split, an old revolutionary who had

been a Vietminh Resistance fighter had this to say:

Of course, this dispute has affected the Front's morale. Sages and intellectuals are worried and don't know what to think of socialism -- are we united or divided? Most of them recognize that China is right....

Another man, a fairly senior propagandist, said that the Soviets believed the communist bloc could achieve final victory through peaceful cooperation followed by a political take-over, while the Red Chinese thought that armed struggle was the only way of overthrowing the existing government and installing a proletarian government that would lead the country to socialism. He added that the Front and the Party were pro-Chinese and agreed that armed conflict was the only way to achieve victory over the Saigon government. One interviewee quoted other cadres as saying that, if the Russians had been on good terms with the Chinese, the war in the South would have been over long ago, thus sparing the South Vietnamese fighters many hardships. A defector gave the Sino-Soviet split as one reason for his decision to come over to the government side.

Expressions of dissatisfaction over the extent of aid from the socialist countries were even more frequent. Some cadres said that Soviet aid was perfunctory. Other compared Chinese promises, allegedly given over the radio, with the limited Chinese involvement. One man said that he didn't think the higher cadres really believed in aid from the socialist countries; the large powers had been talking about this for a long time, but nothing happened.

The lack of Soviet and Chinese response to the American bombing of North Vietnam worried quite a few cadres. Some asked why the Soviets had allowed the United States to bomb the North Vietnamese; they apparently believed that Moscow could have prevented the bombing by making nuclear threats. Others reported that there had been expectations of intervention by Chinese ground forces following the American air attacks, but that these expectations had been disappointed.

Suspensions of Communist Chinese intentions were relatively rarely expressed by the cadres interviewed, but they could be seen occasionally. One cadre ventured the opinion that the Chinese had pushed North Vietnam to attack the South. Another, a defector, said he feared that the

Chinese would take over all Vietnam after the North and South Vietnamese had killed each other off. In general, however, even those who appeared to be trying to tell their interviewer what they thought he would like to hear showed little apprehension of a Chinese take-over.

C. NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM

North Vietnam is presented in official Viet Cong materials not as a separate country but as the northern half of the nation to which all Vietnamese belong. It is said to be a socialistic land, where nobody is wealthy but everyone has enough to eat. It is also a land of justice, dignity, and freedom from foreign domination. "Uncle Ho" is the national hero, leader of the successful struggle against the French, and founder of Vietnamese independence. It is interesting that the Front has not built up the image of southern leaders, and names of the leaders of the National Liberation Front are only rarely known among the Viet Cong.

As far as Viet Cong personnel are concerned, the most important sources of information about North Vietnam are not official documents and indoctrination sessions; rather, they are the regroupees, who spent several years in the North and have firsthand knowledge, as well as the increasing numbers of North Vietnamese in the South. The Hanoi radio and Radio Liberation are also important, but what they say is interpreted against the background of what is already known and what is told by the regroupees. The following observations, with a very few exceptions, are therefore drawn from interviews with those who had been regrouped to North Vietnam in 1954.

Most regroupee cadres, including both captives and defectors, expressed opinions ranging along a continuum that runs from neutrality to a strong commitment to the Northern regime; there is little outright rejection. In general, they spoke favorably of the Northern political system, and some mentioned their gratitude to the "Party and revolution" for the personal opportunities they had been afforded. Those who came from poor family backgrounds were especially grateful for the opportunity to obtain an education. Even while in the North Vietnamese armed forces, some of them had taken part in a program of "cultural training," which enabled them to achieve the equivalent of a high-school

diploma. Others spoke favorably of the North Vietnamese regime because it had helped them develop a sense of dignity, both by its even-handed treatment of all classes and by its association with the Vietnamese victory over the French.

It was also common, however, for regroupees to speak of certain "mistakes" that had been made in the North. Most of them, if they expressed any opinion at all about the future form of government in South Vietnam, said that they would like to see a regime in Saigon similar to that in the North. But they added that such a regime would have to avoid the mistakes that had been made by Hanoi.

Reservations about life in the North fall into several categories: the excesses of North Vietnamese land reform, lack of personal freedom, and comparisons with life in the South.

North Vietnamese land reform was a brutal and bloody affair, and it deeply affected many of the regroupees who witnessed it. In theory, the landlords were to be judged by the villagers, who were to classify them into three categories: those who had been guilty of ferocity to the people or who had collaborated with the French, those who had not oppressed the poor farmers, and those who had participated in the Resistance. Landlords in the first group were to be punished severely, those in the second group were to be required to cede some of their land to farmers who had none, and those in the third were merely to be invited to give up whatever amount of land they thought appropriate. But this was not the way the reform actually worked. In the words of a regroupee who participated in it,

Some of the former Resistants who came back to their village and to their properties were denounced as "landlords" by the peasants. The peasants promoted everybody up the landlord ladder: nonlandlords to landlords; good landlords, former Resistants, to average or even cruel landlords; average landlords to cruel landlords; cruel landlords to very inhuman landlords deserving a death sentence.

Too many of these excesses ruined the land reform.... How could we be so rude to the landlords when Mr. Dong (Pham Van Dong), Mr. Giap (Vo Nguyen Giap), and Mr. Chirh (Truong Chinh) were landlords too?

Another regroupee described how political cadres incited both the peasant population and the troops to denunciations of landlords, many

of whom were innocent of the charges leveled against them. Both he and the previous informant agreed that the denunciations took on a momentum of their own, exceeding, in many cases, the intentions and the control of even the most vindictive cadres:

That was how the drive to motivate the population to apply land reform was conducted; and this drive ended in each hamlet with the trial of the landlord by a people's tribunal. Guilty as well as innocent people were tried. Before the people's tribunal the accused had no one to defend them. They could only bow their heads and listen to the enumeration of their crimes; they could not utter one word. The prosecutor was either a man or a woman belonging to the land reform unit; the presiding judge was also from the land reform unit. The audience only knew to applaud and to shout, "down with...." The death sentence had been decided upon in advance. After the denunciations had all been made, the presiding judge pulled the death sentence statement out of his pocket and read it. Then the prisoners were immediately executed, about 100 meters away from the tribunal.

Those regroupees who were most dedicated to the Viet Cong believed that these excesses could be avoided in the South after the victory of the insurgents. After all, the Northern regime had recognized the mistakes made and had conducted a "rectification of errors" campaign. Other interviewees were not at all sure that the South would not witness a similar bloodbath. The Northern land reform remains a sore spot in history even for enthusiastic Party members.

Remarks about the lack of personal freedom in the North come in many forms. One regroupee stated that "life was too intense, too active.... I wanted to be more easygoing.... They have too many training programs for the men, too many subtle means." Another spoke of the "stifling atmosphere," and a third, in explaining why he had longed for national reunification, referred to "the tense and unbearable atmosphere in the North, which we could escape with national reunification." A regroupee who specified some of the changes that he thought would be desirable in the Northern regime may have been alluding to much the same thing:

The Northern regime is not perfect and requires many changes. I wish for a regime that is really free, where the people are sovereign, where power is not too linked to the Party. In the North the Party involves itself too much in the power of government.

A third group of criticisms of life in the North had a low political content and referred mainly to geographic and social factors. The regrouped found the climate too cold for their tastes, and often had difficulty in adjusting themselves to the personality of the Northerners, whom they found rather reserved and straitlaced, and to the different social customs of the region. Regrouped also commented on the greater poverty of the North, where one had more difficulty in getting enough to eat.

One Southern cadre expressed the further criticism that the North was dominated by the Chinese and Soviets, but it is not known how widely this view is shared:

I had talked with my comrades who were regrouped from North Vietnam and they told me that up there all the factories were in the hands of the Russians and the Chinese, and that caused me to imagine what South Vietnam would become if the Front happened to win.

When regrouped compare life in the South with that in the North, the latter usually suffers by the comparison. (It should not automatically be assumed, however, that those who find life in the South better are basically opposed to the politics of the Northern regime.) One man who, while in the North, had been told about the suffering of the South Vietnamese people experienced a shock when he returned to the South:

After I had learned of the real situation and the life of the people in the South, I became discouraged, and began to compare the life of the North Vietnamese to that of the South Vietnamese in all aspects. I found that the South Vietnamese people are much better off from every point of view. At the present time, they have to endure hardships because of the war; but if it hadn't been for the war, they would be much better off than the North Vietnamese people.

Another regrouped was even more outspoken:

When I finally was allowed to go to the plains, I could see that everything was free in the South: free trading (if you have money, you can buy anything as much as you want, in contrast to the North), free dressing (nobody prevents you from being well-dressed), etc. In my own hamlet, there were only thatch houses at the time I went north. Now, there are plenty of brick houses, or at least the houses have brick walls. The roads are

wide and clean. People can practice their religions freely, can kill cattle for food whenever they want.

Well-indoctrinated Viet Cong, other categories of cadres as well as regroupees, see the Northern and Southern parts of their country united in fighting to expel the foreign invader and to achieve unification and justice. They differ somewhat, however, when it comes to defining just what role the two halves of the country play. Some, especially the regroupees, regard the North as directing the struggle and as a crucial supplier of arms and personnel. As one middle-level cadre said,

I know that the war is under the leadership of the Communist Party in the North, because the Central office for South Vietnam (the highest Viet Cong authority) is a branch of the North Vietnamese Communist Party Central Committee.

Others, a minority, believe that, although the North is helpful, it does not direct the insurgency, nor that its aid is necessary for success. A hard-core Southern cadre illustrated this point of view in response to a question as to whether bombing of North Vietnam could put an end to the war in the South:

When the Americans drop bombs on the North, the North has to defend itself. The South meanwhile has to fight harder.... The mission of the North is to support the South. The mission of the South is to protect the fruit of the revolution (i.e., the North).... From what I understand, bombings of North Vietnam will not put an end to fighting in the South.

Those whose morale is shaky are more likely to believe that the South cannot fight without the North, and also that bombing of the North will result in a reduced stream of men and supplies to the South. One, a village secretary who defected in September 1965, expressed dismay at Hanoi's refusal to negotiate, and suggested that some evil design was being pursued:

Before, Radio Hanoi denounced violations of the Geneva Agreements by the Saigon government, but now that the United States wants to observe the Geneva Agreements, Hanoi has refused to negotiate. I am very surprised at the change in tone of Radio Hanoi. Concerning the damage caused by the air attacks, it did not broadcast any news at all.... When I still lived in the country, I was already asking myself why Hanoi didn't agree to negotiate. I was surprised; maybe the Viet Cong want to push all the Vietnamese people to death.

As far as the Saigon government was concerned, most of the cadres who were interviewed had only a vague and blurred image. Those who were well indoctrinated regarded the government as illegitimate and an American puppet, and therefore as not meriting serious attention. When asked why so many Vietnamese supported this government, the cadres usually replied that either such people were mercenaries and served only for money or position, or that they wrongly believed the Communists to be totalitarian and therefore sought to oppose them. Even cadres who were ideologically disaffected seemed to have very unclear ideas as to what the Saigon government was actually like.

On one point with regard to the South Vietnamese government there is fairly widespread agreement: it is that there has been an improvement since the days of Diem. (Even this proposition would be rejected by the most extreme hard core, who maintain that the Americans have remained the controlling force and that therefore there has been no change.) The Diem regime had a well-defined image, and it was hated. Successor governments may be less well known, but at least there is less to hold against them. As a former Vietminh fighter remarked, "I don't have anything in particular against the present government except the vestiges of the Diem regime."

Improvements in Saigon, according to the remarks of communist cadres, have led to somewhat better behavior on the part of the armed forces and local officials of the South Vietnamese Government, although many interviewees will hasten to add that there is room for much greater improvement. A few cadres say that the policies of the Saigon government are all right but that local officials do not carry them out correctly.

For cadres who are in the Viet Cong armed forces, the important question is not what the Saigon government is like but what the South Vietnamese armed forces are like. Here the ideas are much more definite. According to the official Viet Cong line, the morale of government forces is low because they fight for an illegitimate cause and serve only for pay. Furthermore, the troops are ruthless and cruel. They will kill, or first torture and then kill, anyone who surrenders or is captured. Their appeals to Viet Cong personnel to rally to them are

deceitful; they will treat the defector properly only as long as this serves their purposes, and then they will kill him. One is better advised to die fighting than to fall into government hands.

It is doubtful whether even hard-core cadres accept this picture implicitly. Nevertheless, they probably believe it to be at least partially true. They have to repeat it over and over again when indoctrinating their own men, and they hear it from their superiors as well. They also hear enough stories about individual men who have been killed or mistreated after capture, or when trying to defect, so that they cannot dismiss the indoctrination material completely. At the same time, word about captives or defectors who have been treated correctly also reaches them. The fact that there is a continuous stream of cadres of all types among the defectors is fairly conclusive proof that the official image of the government forces is not entirely accepted. It apparently operates as a brake that makes the decision to defect a more difficult one but does not prevent such a decision when a man is strongly motivated to leave the insurgents.

As far as the image of the government army as a fighting force is concerned, not enough of the cadres who were interviewed expressed an opinion to furnish a basis for generalization. It is fairly clear from the interviews with Viet Cong rank and file, however, that the latter's respect for the fighting qualities of the government soldier has increased during the past year, and it is reasonable to assume that the cadres share this view. At the least, one would expect that those cadres who have faced aggressive and resourceful government units would have grave doubts about the Viet Cong line, while those who have encountered government forces of lower quality would believe it.

Nevertheless, most Viet Cong military cadres feel confident that they could successfully fight government forces if it were not for the heavy weapons (and especially air and artillery) supporting the latter. Man to man or unit to unit, the Viet Cong believe they have the advantage because of better morale and better intelligence, because they hold the initiative and can effect surprise, and because they usually have local numerical superiority and fight from prepared positions at a time and place of their choosing.

V. EXPECTATIONS AS TO THE COURSE OF THE WAR

Whether the Viet Cong's morale is high or low, whether they defect or fight fiercely, depends in part on which side they see as winning, and whether they expect the war to bring them victory or defeat. There are, of course, other reasons for good morale and good performance in battle: some men fight well because they hope for advancement or glory, because of pride in their unit because they feel the omnipresent eye of Viet Cong surveillance on them, or because they think they have no choice but to continue fighting. Nevertheless, among those who are politically conscious -- and this probably includes a majority of the lower cadres -- expectation of final victory or defeat is an important factor in determining attitudes and behavior.

In general, well-indoctrinated captives believe in final victory, while defectors say that they expect the Viet Cong to be defeated. It is reasonable to assume that many defectors are expressing their honest opinions, as a man who firmly believes that his side will emerge victorious is unlikely to desert. On the other hand, some of the many defectors who left the Viet Cong ranks largely for personal reasons probably rationalized their defection, or sought to curry favor with the Saigon authorities, by predicting a Viet Cong defeat. Even so, however, the reasons a defector gives for having abandoned hope of victory are of interest, because they are the ones he has selected as the most plausible.

Among hard-core Viet Cong, the reasons most frequently given for their belief in a communist victory are that they are fighting in a just cause and have the support of the people. As a former Vietminh fighter stated in 1964,

To me, the most striking thing is the expansion and impregnation of the communist doctrine and Communist Party among the population during the past 30 years. I can say with confidence that the Communist Party now has organizations covering almost the entire territory of South Vietnam. The Communist Party is supported by a large part of the population; therefore it will be extremely difficult to eradicate it. Even though we have gone through many difficult periods such as from 1955 to 1959 . . . at the present time, the Party has expanded far and wide, and the people are more and more confident in it. In 1960, the Party soared, and its organizations developed and expanded rapidly.

When a young squad leader in the Viet Cong regional forces was asked whether he thought the insurgents could win without aircraft, he replied:

Those who fight for a just cause, who are loved by the people, will carry the day -- aircraft being unnecessary.

This idea of the superiority of man over weapons is, of course, the official line of the Chinese Communists, and was repeated again and again by dedicated Viet Cong personnel, at least through mid-1965.

A second reason for believing that the insurgents will win, and one that seems to be given increasing emphasis by the Viet Cong, is that they are gaining the support of world opinion and of public opinion within the United States. These ideas, incidentally, were also expressed in 1964 and early 1965, even before demonstrations opposing the Administration's Vietnam policy had attracted a great deal of attention in the United States. A regroupee who had occupied a responsible position as a Viet Cong propaganda cadre told his interviewer:

The Front informed us that the world is divided into two camps. If the Front intensifies its political and military struggle in the South, demonstrations will take place all over the world, even in the USA, and the communist bloc will use political as well as military pressure all over the world to confuse the American government. For example, during the struggle against the French the Vietminh used this political and military pressure very effectively. Demonstrations took place in France to force the French government to sign the Geneva accords. At the same time in Vietnam, the arms struggle was intensified to prevent the French from redeeming the situation.

Even terroristic incidents are used to sway public opinion abroad. According to a former Vietminh,

The placing of a bomb in the Kinh Do theater (Saigon) was done to create talk, to kill a few Americans, to scare others, in the hope that Americans in the United States would oppose the fact that Americans are dying in Vietnam and would press for a retreat of all American troops.

Up until 1965, though much less so since that time, interviewees often adduced a third reason for their belief in ultimate victory: their conviction that the Viet Cong were winning, and that the South Vietnamese and American forces were on their last legs. With Viet Cong propaganda giving great emphasis to each tactical victory and usually ignoring defeats, even the air attacks on North Vietnam were

interpreted as a sign of the insurgents' impending victory:

The Americans attacked the North because they were being defeated in the South. They hoped other countries would intervene, so they could go back to the Geneva Agreements without losing face.

One ingenious respondent managed to see the air attacks on the North as a move that was instigated by the communist side for political reasons:

It might be one of the ruses of the Communists to have the Americans bomb the North, to show which side represents the right cause, to instill hatred for the Americans among the population in communist and neutralist countries, and to make the people in capitalist countries support the communist Vietnam.

Other cadres employed somewhat similar reasoning in saying that they hoped the South Vietnamese and Americans would escalate the war in the North, because then the socialist bloc would intervene and the war would come to an end quickly.

A fourth reason given for the likelihood of a Viet Cong victory is the weakness of South Vietnam. As has been mentioned above, many insurgents believe that the South Vietnamese forces are poorly motivated. They also point out that noncommunist elements in the South are not united and that the Saigon government has changed frequently as a result of successive coups. A district-level official in the Viet Cong shadow government stated: "Internal conflicts and coups d'etat here are the weak points of the Government of Vietnam, and consequently benefit the Front very much."

Finally, the most fanatic of the insurgents insist that the Viet Cong will win because they will keep on fighting as long as necessary. An old Vietminh said: "If we cannot achieve victory in our generation, our children and grandchildren will carry on the struggle." This concept of "protracted war," again, is accepted Chinese Communist doctrine: even one hundred years is not too long to wait for victory.

As opposed to those who expect a Viet Cong victory, a majority of the cadres who defected and a minority of those who were captured see a Viet Cong defeat in the cards, and their proportions seem to have increased since the spring of 1965. In giving their reasons, they

often cite the same factors that are mentioned by the hard-core insurgents, but they draw different conclusions. For instance, a great many who have given up hope of an insurgent victory also mention popular support as a decisive factor, but they say that the Viet Cong are now losing favor among the people. A cadre from the rich Dinh Tuong Province in the Delta stated:

In 1961, when I began to work for the Front, people in my village were all for it. Now, a majority is no longer for it. The Front can carry on the war only with the support of the population. Now that it is on the verge of losing this support its defeat is not far off.

Another cadre from the same province, this one a prisoner, attempted to summarize the reasons why he thought the population was turning away from the Viet Cong:

In 1962 and 1963, the population had confidence in the cadres. They esteemed and respected the cadres. They believed everything the cadres said. But starting in 1964, I observed that the people gradually shunned the cadres. . . I think many reasons accounted for this. First of all, the compulsory draft order which, in spite of a different form and name, was similar to the compulsory draft order issued by the Government, which the cadres had, on many occasions, denounced for its dictatorial and savage nature. Then came the constant increase in (Viet Cong) taxes: compared to the taxes in 1962, those of 1964 exceeded them by 50 or 60 per cent. Even those who had profited from the land distribution found that the taxes had become too high, not including the numerous collections levied many times in one year. Then, finally, there were the problems of insecurity and the fear of death. The six hamlets under Front control were constantly pounded by government artillery shellings and airplane bombings. Sometimes there were dead and wounded and material damage, especially in 1964. The people seemed to blame these attacks on the presence of the Front cadres in the hamlets.

A third cadre from Dinh Tuong confirmed this analysis: "The people do not like heavy (Viet Cong) taxes and having their sons drafted by the Viet Cong. If the Front wants to win, it has to stop oppressing the people." These sentiments are echoed by men from all parts of South Vietnam, but they seem to be most prevalent in the Delta. As a fourth cadre from the Delta said,

The Front is deteriorating every day. It has promised a great deal, but can't keep its promises. Each year it says: "This is the year of decision." It is because of

the Front that the people die in bombing and fighting, that their families are scattered, their property is damaged, and they cannot till their land. Yet the Viet Cong troop support tax gets heavier every day.

Those who foresee a Viet Cong defeat, like those who expect a Viet Cong victory, mention the bombing of North Vietnam, but they draw different conclusions from it. An old Vietminh cadre put it this way:

The Front expected the United States to meet strong reactions from world public opinion and stop bombing the North. However, the Americans still continue to bomb the North, so the judgment of the Front leaders is partially wrong.

Others mentioned that the Viet Cong leaders had been disappointed that air attacks on the North had not called forth more aid from the socialist bloc, and contrasted the lack of response from Communist China and the Soviet Union with the generous support given the South Vietnamese government by the Americans.

It is American material support that usually is mentioned as the clinching argument by those who expect the South Vietnamese government to win out in the end. Government troops are better armed and better fed than their opponents. The Viet Cong, therefore, having inferior weapons and being short of food, cannot hope to win in the long run. In particular, one encounters over and over again the phrase, "The Front cannot win without aircraft."

Among the cadres interviewed there is a third group, composed of men who are unwilling to say which side they think will win in the end. Some of them repeat the slogan that the side will win that has the support of the people, but they do not specify who is gaining and who is losing that support. Others fear that the war will simply drag on and on. A former Vietminh said: "The war will go on for a long time, because neither the Americans nor the North Vietnamese will withdraw from South Vietnam." He went on to explain that the affair had become one of honor and prestige for both, and that therefore neither could withdraw without losing face.

Many of those who foresee a long war believe that it will end with the total destruction of Vietnam, and it is therefore irrelevant to them which side wins. One respondent said: "South Vietnam will

become a battleground and desert." This gloomy prospect is seen as especially likely if the war continues to escalate and the Chinese and Soviets intervene. In the words of a Southern cadre, "If there is a meeting of these two powerful blocs (the Soviets and Chinese versus the United States), none of us will live to see the outcome." A former Vietminh added:

If Red China openly assisted the North, the Americans would fight the Red Chinese and the Red Chinese would have to fight back. If this happened, there would be a general war in the North and the Vietnamese people would get killed.

A few in this third group believe that a stalemate is possible, and express the opinion that concessions by both sides are necessary. One regrouped mentioned the possibility of a negotiated settlement, but his expectations of successful negotiations were not great. For reasons that will be discussed later on, the Viet Cong apparently prefer not to discuss the possibility of negotiations in their indoctrination sessions, and therefore the cadres do not readily think or speak of this alternative.

VI. WEAKNESSES WITHIN THE VIET CONG

Inevitably, the National Liberation Front has a number of problems when it comes to maintaining the morale of its members and ensuring the smooth functioning of so large an organization. These problems appear to be growing. Several cadres said they defected because they couldn't get along with their superiors, or because they were not promoted fast enough. Such complaints, to be sure, are common to organizations of all types. More interesting, therefore, are those having to do with the specific operating techniques of the Viet Cong -- e.g., their use of terror or of criticism sessions -- and these will be dealt with at greater length.

It should be noted that almost any complaint or grievance can either serve as a contributory cause of defection, or else be accepted as a necessary evil by men who are well enough motivated to continue the fight. Many grievances that are mentioned by defectors probably are shared by loyal members of the movement, who may not feel them so keenly or else may see them as outweighed by other factors. In any case, there is rarely a single cause for any individual's defection. Rather, he experiences a gradual buildup of dissatisfactions, and the factor that finally precipitates his decision to leave the Viet Cong may be a quite minor one.

A. PERSONAL AND FAMILY REASONS FOR DISAFFECTION

A few of the cadres probably defected because their personalities were such that they just couldn't get along with anyone. One man, who was asked whether he liked the spirit of unity in the Viet Cong, seems to have been of that temperament:

I don't know who was united with whom in the Front, but I certainly was not united with anybody. I was always quarreling with the cadres. I didn't think that the daily self-criticism sessions were building up our unity either. What was said during the self-criticism sessions went in one ear and out the other.

Cases like this, however, were rare. Since even the lower cadres were rather carefully screened, and often were gratified by promotion, they

ordinarily made a somewhat better adjustment than the one quoted.

It was much more common for a man to harbor grievances against a particular superior who did not appreciate his work or who blocked his promotion. Also relatively common among defectors were men who had been criticized for ineffective performance, either justly or unjustly. Even defectors who thought such reproaches merited occasionally mentioned them as contributing to their decision to leave the Viet Cong. The frequent criticism sessions thus appear to be a source of weakness as well as of strength in the organization.

Families played an important part in many defections, sometimes as a primary cause and sometimes as a secondary one. Most commonly, members of a family that had no one left who could till the fields would get in touch with a son and ask him to come back and support them. In several such cases, local village cadres had promised instead to take care of the family of the man in question and had then not done so, causing him to feel considerable resentment. One military cadre was so incensed upon returning to his hamlet and finding his wife and children destitute that he attempted to kill some of the Viet Cong village officials by throwing a grenade at them. The grenade (of Chinese manufacture) did not go off, and he fled to the nearest government post.

When a man had a relative who worked for the Saigon government, or who was serving in the South Vietnamese armed forces, his family sometimes advised him to rally to the government, and in such cases they usually made arrangements for him to be received by the appropriate government officials. This process could, of course, work both ways. Families that lived in areas controlled by the Viet Cong were often induced to send word to their sons who were with the government forces urging them to return home and join the insurgents.

A family could also serve as transmitter for certain types of information: that a man from the same village had rallied to the government and was well treated, that a job was available in the civilian economy, and so on. The report of a propaganda cadre is fairly typical:

My family came to visit me once and told me to rally.
At that time, I was going through an ideological evolution,
but I kept it to myself. At times, I went through a

difficult mental struggle. And I wondered whether I would stay alive or not if I rallied, and whether or not I would survive if I remained in the Front. My family told me to return home and look for a job.

B. IDEOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL REASONS

Relatively few cadres, even among defectors, gave ideological or philosophical reasons for being dissatisfied with the Viet Cong. To say much the same thing in another way, few of them had any set of ideas that they wished to substitute for the system presented to them in Viet Cong indoctrination sessions. They might object to particular propaganda themes used by the insurgents, but they rarely could advance a coherent scheme of their own.

One of the few intellectuals interviewed did, however, come close to formulating such a scheme of ideas. A former Vietminh, he had decided after many years of service with the insurgents that the movement was in fact a totalitarian one guilty of aggression, and that it was responsible for the misery brought on the Vietnamese people. His political formula was a very simple one, reminiscent of that of European eighteenth-century political philosophers: "Personal happiness should be in harmony with the nation's happiness." He probably would have accepted Bentham's thesis that the function of government was to work for the greatest good of the greatest number.

Others objected to the religious policies of the Viet Cong, and religious reasons sometimes played a role in defection. A former propaganda cadre stated:

To the Communists, religion is an obstacle. Communism and religion cannot live side by side. If religion survives, communism will go out of existence. If communism survives, there will be no religion.

It should be noted that this statement conflicts with the official line, which maintains that the Viet Cong do not oppose religion. Anyone who cited religious reasons for disaffection with the movement, therefore, had already reached the stage where he contrasted what the Viet Cong said with what they actually did, and had already rejected at least part of the propaganda line to which he had been exposed.

A few cadres from the ranks of the well-to-do farmers ran afoul of

Viet Cong land redistribution policies. One man cited as a reason for defecting the fact that his family's rice lands had been distributed to the poor peasants. Others believed that their promotions had been held up because they had been classified by the Viet Cong as coming from a "bourgeois" background. In such cases, however, ideological or philosophical considerations probably played a minor role. These individuals might very well have accepted Viet Cong policies if they had not been personally affected by them.

C. DISILLUSIONMENT WITH VIET CONG PROPAGANDA AND TACTICS

Almost all defectors, and quite a few prisoners, mentioned that they had been troubled by the contrast between what the Viet Cong said and what they did. Some of these statements may have been calculated to make a good impression on the interviewers, but many of them are well-documented and occur so frequently that one cannot dismiss them entirely. Furthermore, even the lower-level cadres were kept better informed than the rank and file about actual Viet Cong policies and tactics; they were thus in a position where they could observe any disparities between words and deeds.

It should be noted, however, that hard-core cadres were not troubled by these disparities. Either they resolutely denied that they existed, or else they accepted them as compromises that had to be made for the sake of a good cause. Often, a man did not notice contradictions in Viet Cong propaganda and policies until he had become at least partially disaffected for other reasons. An assistant platoon leader from the Viet Cong main force stated, for instance: "I thought that the Front aims did not correspond with what happened in reality. Those who fought did not enjoy any benefits, and after they died their families were rejected by the Party." It is possible that, if this man or his family had received greater rewards for his service in the movement, he would have been willing to overlook any conflicts he may have noted between Party promises and performance.

Many cadres mentioned that they had served in the Viet Cong for some time before learning of the movement's true aims. According to

a platoon leader,

Had I understood them (the Viet Cong aims) as I understand them now . . . I would not have joined them. Nobody had told me about them. Furthermore, the few examples they gave me in their propaganda had actually happened. I worked for them for six years, but not until after I had become a Party member did I realize their nature. They made wonderful promises but had no means or intentions of carrying them out.

Another man, of equivalent rank, remarked: "I think the more the people get to know the Front, the more they will be dissatisfied." It is common for defectors, and even for regroupee prisoners, to say that, though at first they believed what they were taught in indoctrination sessions, their subsequent observations and experiences led them to doubt the truth of these lessons and change their minds.

One of the things that troubled many cadres was the Viet Cong's use of terror and violence. According to its official line, the movement has no need to resort to terror tactics and will execute wrongdoers only after they have been condemned by "the people." This line contrasts sharply with such observations as the following, reported by a civilian cadre from the Delta:

Mr. Vat was kidnapped and assassinated. Nobody knew anything about this. I was one of the very few cadres who knew about this. The third case concerned Mr. Bat Hanh, and took place in Phuoc Hai village in August 1963. He was a very rich man. The cadres in Phuoc Hai accused him of being a spy in the pay of the government. They arrested him and jailed him for one year. During this imprisonment, he was tortured so badly that he had traces of torture on him. The cadres no longer dared to release him since they were afraid lest the villagers know about their use of torture. They condemned him to death for spying and exploitation of the poor. At the moment of execution, they gathered about one hundred people from the village to witness it. A few members of Mr. Bat Hanh's family tried to untie him. The cadres opened fire and wounded one of them. After they had beheaded Mr. Bat Hanh, his family asked for his body to bury it. The cadres refused and took the corpse somewhere else. A large number of the people in Phuoc Hai village asserted that Mr. Bat Hanh had been the victim of an injustice.*

*The names of the victims and village have been changed to protect the identity of the witness.

Another cadre remarked: "I myself have carried out orders to kill innocent people who were not able to pay contributions to the Front." A third observed that, although the Viet Cong maintained that they did not torture people, they actually did, and that their policy was one of cruelty under a surface of softness. He added: "I worked in the security section. I know how the Viet Cong treated people. Outwardly they said that they did not torture but only interrogated them, but I have witnessed many sessions where the poor guy was being tortured and beaten mercilessly. I realized that everything the Viet Cong said was lies and deceptions." A related complaint was that the insurgents often put villagers in positions where they would be the first to be hurt in a clash with government forces.

Disaffected cadres, and some who still belonged to the hard core, also noted that the participation of the people in Viet Cong activities was not entirely voluntary. As a former Vietminh fighter put it, this participation was "partly spontaneous, partly forced." One man said that he had been compelled to join the insurgents "to be at peace with the Viet Cong." Others noted that people who lived in areas controlled by the Viet Cong, and even some of those who merely had relatives living in insecure regions, were forced to join the movement. One old fighter, describing how the people in the area behaved, said simply:

The government was not there any longer; therefore the people had to comply with every order. How could they protest when all the cadres carried weapons?

Terror often played a role in securing popular compliance. The following story of how a mass demonstration was organized was told by the former chief of a Viet Cong village information committee:

On November 12, 1964, at 8:00 a.m., armed Viet Cong went from house to house in my hamlet and forced everyone to go and meet in my hamlet. When I arrived there, I saw at least three thousand people, most of whom were from my village. There were some thirty Viet Cong, half of whom were armed with rifles. One Viet Cong stood on a table and harangued the inhabitants. He said this in essence: "I call on you all to draw up in lines and go to the district chief's town (Song Cau) to ask the government authorities never to shell your village and kill innocent people. It's in your interest that I ask you to do this. We people of the Front ask nothing from you. Those who refuse to take part in the demonstration will be counted

as traitors opposing the people's interests, and will be executed."

Then he said there was a man in the government's pay who opposed the organization of the demonstration. The Front had sentenced him to death, and he was going to be executed. Then the Viet Cong brought forward a man and tied him two hundred meters from the spot, and killed him with gunshot before the crowd's terrified eyes. As a result, everyone neatly put himself in line, and marched in the direction of Song Cau. The Viet Cong marched outside the lines on either side of the road.

Another reason for disillusionment, and one that often grew gradually in the minds of Viet Cong cadres, was the observation that the insurgents did not represent a democratic movement and were simply "using" the people for their own ends. As a Southern cadre said, "I ascertained that the Front didn't work for the people's happiness at all." Another observed that, after many years of working for the Viet Cong, he had come to the conclusion that the movement's alleged aims were only for propaganda purposes: "They said the Front worked for the people, but in reality the Front only worked for the Party, without ever thinking of the people. They talked of freedom, but they deprived them of all freedom; those who didn't obey them were threatened, maltreated, and murdered."

Cadres, especially those with several years' service, were most likely to see through the outward trappings of democracy that were sometimes employed by the Viet Cong. A man who had fought with the Vietminh observed that, at the village level, decisions were allegedly reached by a democratic process after discussion among the various members of the village committee. In practice, however, the Party sends a delegate to the village committee, and he "begins the debates and he pulls the Party strings," and the debates thus end with the solutions proposed by the Party. Another man described the way in which those whom the insurgents had decided to eliminate were "judged":

They said it was up to the people to make the decision, but really they were using the people as a smoke screen to do what they had decided to do. They had decided to kill these people, but they wanted to show that they were democratic and that it was the people's verdict and not theirs. The responsibility for killing these individuals would rest squarely on the shoulders of the villagers. The Viet Cong

organized the meeting. Before that they had planted many people of their own to mingle with the villagers, so, when the Viet Cong asked for a verdict, these "plants" shouted and jumped up and down saying that those people deserved to be killed and that they would not be content with any sort of leniency shown by the tribunal. At last the chairman who sat as judge said that it was the will of the people that those on trial should be killed.

Some disaffected cadres not only dismissed the Viet Cong's democratic pretensions as mere window dressing but also denied their claim that they were leading a war of national liberation. Instead, these men described the war as one in which class was pitted against class and one religious group against another. A Southern cadre spoke of his realization that the alleged revolution was only a class struggle incited by the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communists. Another remarked that the Viet Cong did not really want to unite the people but wanted only to set class against class. According to a former Vietminh fighter, the Viet Cong always attempted to create conflict between the government and the religious groups, as they did, for example, by provoking government troops into firing at the faithful during demonstrations. A former Viet Cong hamlet official summed up the reactions of the disaffected when he said:

When the Viet Cong infiltrated my village . . . they sowed trouble everywhere they went. I have ascertained that there is a great difference between their words and their acts, and it is impossible to live under their regime.

Viet Cong propaganda tactics, though usually very successful in the short run, may cause disillusionment in the long run. This is not only due to the conflict between words and deeds, but is the result of the distorted picture that the Communists present both of the course of the war and of the world outside. A man may accept that picture as true so long as he is protected from information that does not come from Viet Cong or North Vietnamese sources, but eventually, especially if he is a cadre, he is likely to find himself in situations where the contrast between propaganda and reality becomes evident. A Viet Cong propagandist with many years of service described his conclusion about the propaganda techniques of the organization:

The Viet Cong tactic is to exaggerate all the bad news and bad public opinion as far as the government is concerned. For example, if Buddhist students demonstrate against the government, the Viet Cong will exploit this and exaggerate the incident. They will say that the demonstrators have been ruthlessly suppressed. They were killed and arrested because they opposed the government. However, the Viet Cong do not make up the stories from nowhere; they always base their rumors on real fact or on general public opinion.

With respect to news about military matters, Viet Cong propagandists seem to have gone beyond the prescription that every story should have some basis in fact. Numerous interviewees said that they had been told only about victories by the insurgents and never of their defeats. When they learned about Viet Cong defeats from other sources, or experienced them personally, they frequently became disillusioned. A Southern cadre who was asked why he had lost confidence in the promises of the Party replied simply: "I realized the strength on both sides." Another complained that government forces often were victorious and that the Viet Cong did not mention these victories. Then he added: "I realized that I had sacrificed everything for things which didn't exist." Claims about the numbers of American and South Vietnamese planes shot down are so grossly exaggerated that they have struck more thoughtful members of the movement as ridiculous: "Some old people (in a Viet Cong-controlled area), not being afraid to die, sarcastically pointed out that the Front had downed so many government airplanes that these days they were no longer seen."

Similarly, Viet Cong propagandists have apparently painted a picture of the insurgents' life that is very misleading, and, as a result, many young men, after having been talked into joining, are disillusioned when they encounter reality, and presently look for an opportunity to defect. As already mentioned, the same is true with respect to the picture of life in South Vietnam that is presented to the regrouped. Having been told that the people in the South were suffering extreme privations, those who were infiltrated back into the South actually found life better than it had been in the North.

As time goes on, the contrast between words and deeds, between propaganda and reality, probably will become more and more troublesome for the Viet Cong. Their system makes it possible for them to maintain

a fiction for a certain length of time, but in the long run this is likely to produce disillusionment among all but the most dedicated members of the movement.

D. DISLIKE OF REGIMENTATION

Individual liberties receive a low valuation in the Viet Cong organization. Regimentation and surveillance are intense. It is probable that some of the insurgents do not rebel very strongly against this state of affairs. The Viet Cong selection mechanism may operate in such a way that true "organization men" with authoritarian personalities are spotted among the mass and are advanced, with the result that the higher ranks are composed of those who actually enjoy the lack of personal freedom or discretion and who have found a comfortable niche in the movement. Be this as it may, a substantial number of the cadres who were interviewed, both prisoners and defectors, mentioned regimentation as among the things that they disliked most about the Viet Cong. Several said that they feared being turned into machines. A prisoner who had been a member of a Viet Cong village administration described the situation as follows:

At first, everything was presented very attractively, but as time goes on one finds that not everything is so nice. One is bound more and more by discipline, until the moment when one is that there is no more freedom and that one is transformed into a machine and a slave of sorts. One cannot smoke a cigarette or take a hundred steps without asking for permission. One cannot have a friend who is not a member of the Party. One cannot even visit his wife or parents now and then. I did not expect to lead such a life. But once one is in, one can no longer withdraw.

Another former village official also mentioned lack of freedom as one of the most oppressive aspects of life with the Viet Cong: "I had no freedom. I was constantly watched in my work. When we worked in a team, we never trusted each other." A platoon leader echoed these sentiments when asked whether there was anything he disliked about life with the Viet Cong: "It was the discipline, the Party discipline, or you can call it the orders of the Party. . . . Whatever orders you get in the name of the Party, there's no way to refuse carrying them out."

He, too, mentioned that he was afraid of being gradually turned into a machine. A second military cadre was more concerned about the lack of freedom of speech:

I had to conform to the Party line. If I didn't I would be considered as entertaining reactionary thoughts. When I left to join the Front, I thought I would have to endure material hardships only and would be allowed to say what I wanted. But once in the Front I was forced to conform to their line.

Within a military organization, one would expect discipline to be tight. Even in a civilian environment, however, the Viet Cong managed to organize a succession of little totalitarian societies. A hamlet guerrilla gave the following description of the "liberation" of his hamlet by the insurgents:

The liberation process was the following: First, the Viet Cong organized popular meetings, during which they pointed out to the people that they should be grateful for being able to return to live in their old hamlet. They said the people were now free to work, free to move, and furthermore, their land was just outside their hamlet. After the meetings, the Viet Cong then set up popular organizations comprising all the inhabitants grouped into four categories: the young men, the women, the farmers, and the elders. They also organized the hamlet administrations with the hamlet cadres, then the village administration. . . . The liberation could be considered completed when the different popular groups were set up and when the cadres could mobilize the population for collective labor.

A former Vietminh gave the following description of what life was like in Viet Cong-controlled areas:

They forced the people to work day and night. Nobody could enjoy any leisure and hence people had no time to reflect on what was going on around them. Missions followed meetings and vice versa, taking up all the time and thoughts of the people living in liberated zones.

According to a montagnard cadre, meetings played a significant role in maintaining the rigid controls: "At night they compelled us to attend meetings, thirty times per month, without omitting a single day. After organizing one association, they organized another."

Some respondents contrasted this situation with life under government control. A Viet Cong squad leader observed that, before the insurgents took control of his village, "whether hungry or well-fed,

I was left alone. In the Front, I had no freedom whatsoever. Even if I had money, I was not allowed to eat good food." These sentiments echoed by a Viet Cong platoon leader:

A government soldier can say anything, discuss anything with his comrades. A Front soldier, on the contrary, can never say what he thinks when he talks with his comrades; he has to pay attention to what he says. He can never say anything that may be taken as anti-Front. If he does, he exposes himself to reprimands and punishments. Besides, a government soldier, during his off-duty time, can take a stroll in the market, can chat with anyone. By contrast, a Front soldier cannot do these things.

A senior propagandist and former Vietminh fighter who has been quoted previously had this to say about the two systems:

When I worked in the propaganda training section I gradually came to understand how the Viet Cong transformed people into machines, devoid of thoughts (except for thinking of Uncle Ho and the Party), and ready to sacrifice everything for the Viet Cong. Then I compared communism with the government line and policy. Even though there were many things about the government that I did not like, such as the attitude of the low-level officials and of the soldiers, who were extremely arrogant toward the people, I like the freedom of movement, of speech, and of religion, and many other freedoms which one enjoys under the government.

Cadres and Party members are not freed from the controls that are applied to the rest of the population. Rather, they are subject to even more stringent surveillance. A regrouped cadre reported: "The (Party) members observe each other, watch each other, make reports. They are themselves the subject of reports from the mass whom they must educate." He also mentioned the use of espionage and self-criticism as control mechanisms, and concluded: "I found the control very tight." Cadres and Party members who are freedom-loving spirits must find life with the Viet Cong even more oppressive than do members of the rank and file.

E. WAR-WEARINESS

Those cadres who have not become disillusioned with the Viet Cong or restive under its tight controls may yet be weary of the war. This is especially true among military men who have spent years in the

mountains and jungles, separated from their families, and living under conditions of intense discomfort, privation, and danger. By far the most frequently given reason for defection is: "I couldn't stand the hardships any longer." Regroupees, who in some cases had been separated from their families for ten years or more, were most subject to loneliness, but even cadres from the Delta had grown weary as they saw the war drag on year after year. It is clear that even among the cadres who continue the struggle many are affected by war-weariness. As one former Vietminh remarked, "Wherever the cadres do not like the war and long for peace the combat villages are hurriedly made."

The Viet Cong leadership is aware of this situation, which has apparently forced it to change its indoctrination materials on several occasions. At one time, according to an insurgent propagandist, the line taken in study sessions was that the war would end through negotiations; but this theme of a negotiated peace was dropped, because "it made a number of cadres and fighters weary, and they just waited for negotiations. Therefore, the Front immediately had to order the study of the general offensive and the general insurrection." Similarly, the Viet Cong leadership has tended to soft-pedal the concept of protracted conflict, and instead has been emphasizing that the struggle has entered a decisive phase, in order to boost the morale of cadres and fighters. A cadre in Central Vietnam reported:

The regroupees told everybody that 1964 would see an end of the war because the Americans would be forced to ask for an armistice. The purpose of these regroupees was to lure comrades into staying with the Front. We are now in 1965 and no such thing has happened. Therefore, I know they were tricking us.

War-weariness is heightened in some cases by the fact that the Diem regime, which propelled so many men into the insurgency, is now a thing of the past. A captive put it this way:

I joined the Front because I hated Ngo Dinh Diem. . . Now everything is different. . . . I am fed up because I have been working for the revolution for a long time, and furthermore, Mr. Diem is no longer around.

Substantially the same sentiments were expressed by a number of defectors, including a regroupee who said:

I learned of the sufferings of the South Vietnamese people under the Ngo Dinh Diem regime, and I wanted to liberate the population from Diem's tyranny. For this ideal I endured all the hardships in the Front. . . . I did not want to rally when Diem was still in power, because I was prejudiced against his regime. I believed that his regime was totalitarian and cruel. Also, I did not have the opportunity to defect.

While Viet Cong propaganda has continued to insist that all South Vietnamese regimes are American puppets and that there are no essential differences among them, many members of the movement obviously believe that there has been an improvement since the fall of Diem.

F. INTERNAL FRICTIONS WITHIN THE VIET CONG

The Viet Cong organization, of course, suffers from internal frictions. What is remarkable is not that these frictions exist but that they are so well controlled and interfere so little with the activities of the movement. Indeed, although such cases may well exist, we have not come across a single instance in which conflicts among various elements within the Viet Cong have given rise to difficulties serious enough to cause major rifts in a unit. Defection and poor morale, in our experience, is usually an individual or a small-group matter that does not reflect conflicts among major elements, although factionalism within Viet Cong village administrations appears to be growing. This factionalism often is centered around rivalry between civilian and military elements of the local National Liberation Front structure.

There are several kinds of internal friction, however, that might become significant in time. One of these, already apparent, arises from the animosity between regroupees and Southern cadres (especially those who were recruited in the South after 1958). It is not uncommon for the latter to complain about the arrogance of the former and to allege that they are given better positions and more rapid promotions. Former Vietminh fighters who stayed in the South are especially likely to be bitter about this because, as they point out, the regroupees did not have to endure the persecution of the Diem regime but, instead, were comfortably taken care of in the North. One Southern cadre complained:

The returnees from North Vietnam consider the South Vietnamese cadres their lackeys. They are very arrogant, and I myself have been ordered by them to do this or that.

Another South Vietnamese, a district-level official, replied when asked whether he had met any regroupees or infiltrated cadres:

I met many of them. They worked in province or higher units. . . . The Front lauded them to the skies and trusted them more than Southern cadres. They were often assigned to steering committees. They behaved badly toward their Southern comrades, whom they despised, thus destroying the unity of the Front. They didn't reveal it, but everybody knew that complex. The Southern cadres and fighters endured hardships for years while they were enjoying themselves in the North where peace prevailed. And now, when the struggle has already been started in the South, they come to command and show themselves to be overbearing, etc., thus bringing division into the Front ranks.

Similarly, a Southern cadre who had served in combat for three years complained that the cadres from the North were arrogant, enjoyed high positions, and looked down on the Southerners: "Most of us hated them, and thought they were haughty."

Two other possible points of friction will be mentioned for the sake of completeness, although we have little information about them. One is the likelihood that the infiltration of large numbers of ethnic North Vietnamese forces into South Vietnam will cause problems for the Viet Cong, particularly if more and more individual Northerners are assigned to Southern units as replacements for cadres who have become casualties of age, disease, or battle. Resentment of the kind that now exists between regroupees and Southern cadres might be even more intense and frequent between Southerners and Northerners.

Another kind of division could occur between those who are convinced that the Viet Cong cannot win and those who want to continue the fighting. This difference of opinion was mentioned by one defector in our sample, but it does not at this time appear to amount to a serious split.

VII. OPERATIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Lower-level cadres are one of the most rewarding propaganda targets within the National Liberation Front. While vitally important to the movement, they are not immune to disaffection, and it is probable that a major effort to undermine their morale or to persuade them to join the government side would have worthwhile results.⁷ Higher cadres, on the other hand, certainly those of province level and above, are likely to be so firmly committed to the Party and to the aims of the insurrection that they cannot be affected by mass propaganda, at least not at this stage. Dealing with them will require other methods, such as, for example, the personal approach used by the British to bring about surrenders by major guerrilla leaders in Malaya.

The rank and file of the Viet Cong, although it includes some fanatics, will be unable to continue effective resistance if a sufficient proportion of the lower cadres can be neutralized or won over. The extent to which this can be done depends mainly on the course of military operations and on the substantive policies adopted by the Saigon government; propaganda can be no more than an auxiliary tool. If the Viet Cong win major victories, no propaganda campaign can be of very much help. On the other hand, if the government gains a military advantage, propaganda may be able to exploit this. Similarly, if the government offers lower-level cadres substantial inducements to defect, propaganda will be much more effective than if the government offers little or nothing by way of inducement.

Recommendations regarding policies to be applied to the Viet Cong cannot follow automatically from an analysis such as the one presented in this Memorandum, since many factors must be taken into consideration in addition to the ones here discussed. However, we have outlined below a number of suggestions regarding the tone and content of government propaganda, followed by a few policy suggestions for possible consideration.

⁷See J. M. Carrier and C.A.H. Thomson, Viet Cong Motivation and Morale: The Special Case of Chieu Hoi, The RAND Corporation, RM-4830-ISA/ARPA, April 1966.

A. THE TONE AND SUBSTANCE OF PROPAGANDA

1. Emphasize the contrast between Viet Cong words and deeds.

This contrast is already noticeable to many cadres, and Saigon's propaganda should give as many illustrations of it as possible, especially instances that can be verified by Viet Cong personnel through their own immediate experience. To name a few examples: The National Liberation Front does not take care of the families of its members, although in many cases it has specifically promised to do so. The Viet Cong say that they do not employ torture and terror, but many cadres are in a position to observe that this statement is incorrect. The Front sacrifices innocent civilians and urges the people to resist the government at the same time that it cannot protect them. It speaks of peace, while prolonging the war.

2. Be rigorously truthful in presenting the news. The Saigon government should build its reputation for truthfulness by giving word of government defeats and problems, as well as victories and successes, even when it hurts. This policy will serve to underscore the unreliability and exaggeration of Viet Cong propaganda. Anything that can be done to increase the accuracy of government information will pay excellent dividends in the long run. The question is, however, not only truthfulness, but how to inform those who are in the Viet Cong ranks. Propaganda successes of the Viet Cong are partially due to their ability to isolate the people under their control from news about what is going on.

3. Use very personal propaganda appeals. The Viet Cong, and probably all Vietnamese, are much more susceptible to personal appeals than to abstract ones. Face-to-face propaganda should be intensified. As much use as possible should be made of family connections. When the mass media are employed, these should be personalized, as is already being done in some cases. Leaflets should contain names and pictures. Radio programs aimed at Viet Cong cadres should include taped interviews with cadres who have already defected, as well as messages from people in government areas to their relatives and friends who are cadres.

4. Publicize the reasons why numerous cadres have defected and provide information on how to defect. All cadres should be told that many of their comrades have compared conditions of life on the Viet Cong side with conditions on the government side and have decided in favor of the latter. They should also be informed about the most successful methods of defection whenever this can be done without giving away secrets to the Viet Cong. The oppressive control and surveillance mechanisms in Viet Cong military units and villages should be contrasted with the greater personal freedom in government units and areas; the harsh life of the Viet Cong in the woods should be compared with the more civilized existence of those who throw in their lot with the Saigon regime, and so on. Cadres should be reminded that they will increasingly be caught between the unrealistic and unpopular policies of the Viet Cong leadership and the growing difficulties of implementing them. They should be made to realize that, as they try to comply with orders to collect higher taxes, draft more teenagers, and force people to die in a hopeless cause, all they can expect is hatred from the people and criticism from above. All this should be presented to them in immediate, personal terms, not in generalities.

5. Give a clearer picture of what the United States is doing in Vietnam. This cannot be done only through policy statements and general descriptions of U.S. aims. Although these may be helpful when linked with concrete examples of American-Vietnamese cooperation, it is important to stress also that some cadres have come to doubt the truthfulness of Viet Cong propaganda regarding the United States as a result of observations that they have made personally or that have been reported to them. Repeated citation of specific and relatively minor examples of U.S. behavior, which the Vietnamese can verify for themselves, is probably the best way of gradually building an accurate picture of the United States and its aims.

6. Emphasize that those who fight for the Viet Cong are prolonging the war and thus destroying Vietnam. Numerous cadres have indicated that they are seriously concerned about the effect of a long war on their country. Some of them are aware that the Viet Cong started the war. The idea to be emphasized is that there will be fighting as

long as the Viet Cong persist in their attacks, and that the patriotic thing to do is to stop the fighting. Former cadres should be allowed to formulate in their own terms statements encouraging the Viet Cong along such lines, and these might then be used in the government's propaganda output.

B. PROPAGANDA REQUIRING POLICY DECISIONS

Propaganda will be much more effective if it is backed by policies that are specifically designed to undermine support for the Viet Cong and increase support for the government. Some of these policies will not be easy to adopt. Nevertheless, it may be useful to indicate directions that might be followed, should the overall political situation permit it.

1. Increase the inducements to defect that can be offered to cadres. As has been noted above, Viet Cong cadres are likely to be more attracted by rewards of power and respect (or status) than the Viet Cong rank and file, and less susceptible to financial inducements. An offer of safe-conduct, no reprisals, and cash rewards for any weapons brought in is unlikely to tempt most cadres unless they are already seriously disaffected. It would not be a simple matter for the Saigon government to promise that those cadres who defected would be eligible for positions of authority and confidence. Nevertheless, if a way could be found to offer such an inducement, the effect would probably be considerable. It might be possible, for instance, to find more jobs for former Viet Cong cadres in organizations involved in economic reconstruction, and to let it be known that responsible positions in these organizations were available to future defectors who were qualified for them. (Such offers could be made indirectly, as by publicizing interviews with former Viet Cong cadres who had already been given jobs by the Saigon government.) At least, government propaganda should emphasize that cadres who defect are treated with respect, and should give specific accounts of cadres who, having defected, have achieved responsible positions.

2. Demonstrate that the Saigon government is interested in serving all the people. Some Viet Cong cadres have expressed their concern over indications that the National Liberation Front is waging a class war; they are also troubled by the communist tactic of setting one group in the population against another. To take advantage of these fears, the government should seek to demonstrate that it recognizes the need for all Vietnamese to work together in rebuilding the country -- including those who have participated in the insurgency.

One move in this direction might be to encourage the formation of an Association of Former Vietminh Fighters who are loyal to the government. The ranks of this organization could be swelled by defectors who formerly served with the Vietminh. Indeed, an association of this kind might be asked to take over the rehabilitation of such defectors and to help find positions for them. It would also be helpful if more publicity were given to former Vietminh who are now serving the government in military or civilian capacities.

In addition, the activities of political groups of various shades should be publicized to show that within the ranks loyal to the government there is room for all those who are devoted to the welfare of Vietnam.

3. Demonstrate that the Viet Cong are losing popular support. There are numerous indications that the Viet Cong are losing popular support in many areas of South Vietnam. This does not mean that the government is gaining proportionately in popularity. Nevertheless, if the Viet Cong cadres can be made aware that they are losing popular support, this will greatly strengthen the government's cause, because many cadres believe -- apparently sincerely -- that the side that has the support of the people will win in the end. Once they become convinced that the masses are turning against the Viet Cong, their expectation of victory will weaken, and they will move that much nearer to the point of defection.

Some specific indications that the Viet Cong are losing support may be found within the present context; they include the increasing numbers of defectors, and people's growing resistance to paying Viet Cong taxes. However, the most dramatic way of demonstrating a shift

in popular attitudes would be to hold more and more free elections in areas that are sufficiently secure, and even to allow rank-and-file Viet Cong members to participate in these elections. Moreover, the elected authorities might then be given considerably greater authority to deal with local or provincial questions.

C. THE PROBLEMS OF NATIONALISM AND LEGITIMACY

The most important propaganda tasks are to enlist nationalistic sentiment on the side of the South Vietnamese government, and to establish in the minds of the people the conviction that the Saigon regime is the legitimate government of the country. These tasks cannot be accomplished quickly and by propaganda alone; nor do our interviews with Viet Cong cadres suggest how they might be accomplished. However, if the Saigon government can demonstrate that it is interested in the welfare of all the people of Vietnam and is receiving obedience and active cooperation from an ever larger proportion of them, and if it can point to its sponsorship of a number of free elections, even if they are local ones, its claim to legitimacy as the representative of Vietnamese nationalism will be greatly strengthened.

At the same time, Saigon's propaganda agencies can point to the mounting evidence of misconduct within Viet Cong ranks and a growing factionalism in the National Liberation Front. As the Viet Cong administration is known to be deteriorating, it will become a less and less acceptable alternative to the South Vietnamese government.

VIET CONG CADRES: CHAF

	Prisoners	Defectors	Party Members		Year of Birth								Year of Entry into Vietminh				(
			POWs	Defectors	1905-1915	1916-1920	1921-1925	1926-1930	1931-1935	1936-1940	1941-1943	1945-1948	1949-1951	1952-1954	1955	1956	
Regroupees	44	14	30	10		6	9	13	24	5		26	15	17			
Total: 58			(2 not given)				(1 not given)										
Vietminh Cadres who remained in the South	17	3	13	2	4	4	4	5	3			15	2	3	4		
Total: 20			(1 not given)									(1 of whom joined Communist Party in 1936)					
Southern Cadres: non-Vietminh	11	23	7	16		1	1	4	7	13	8						
Total: 34																	
Total sample: 112																	
Totals:	72	40	50	28	4	11	14	22	34	18	8	41	17	20	4		

Appendix

CADRES: CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE

Year of Entry into National Liberation Front (For regroupées: year of infiltration to South)												Date of Capture or Defection						
52- 54	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	Jan- Dec 1962	Jan- June 1963	Jul- Dec 1963	Jan- June 1964	Jul- Dec 1964	Jan- June 1965	Jul- Sep 1965
7						3	14	15	15	11		4	6	7	18	17	6	
3	4	3	2		1	3	4		2	1			1	1	4	10	3	1
			3	1	5	5	8	2		6	4				1	6	23	4
0	4	3	5	1	6	11	26	17	17	18	4	4	7	8	23	33	32	5

2